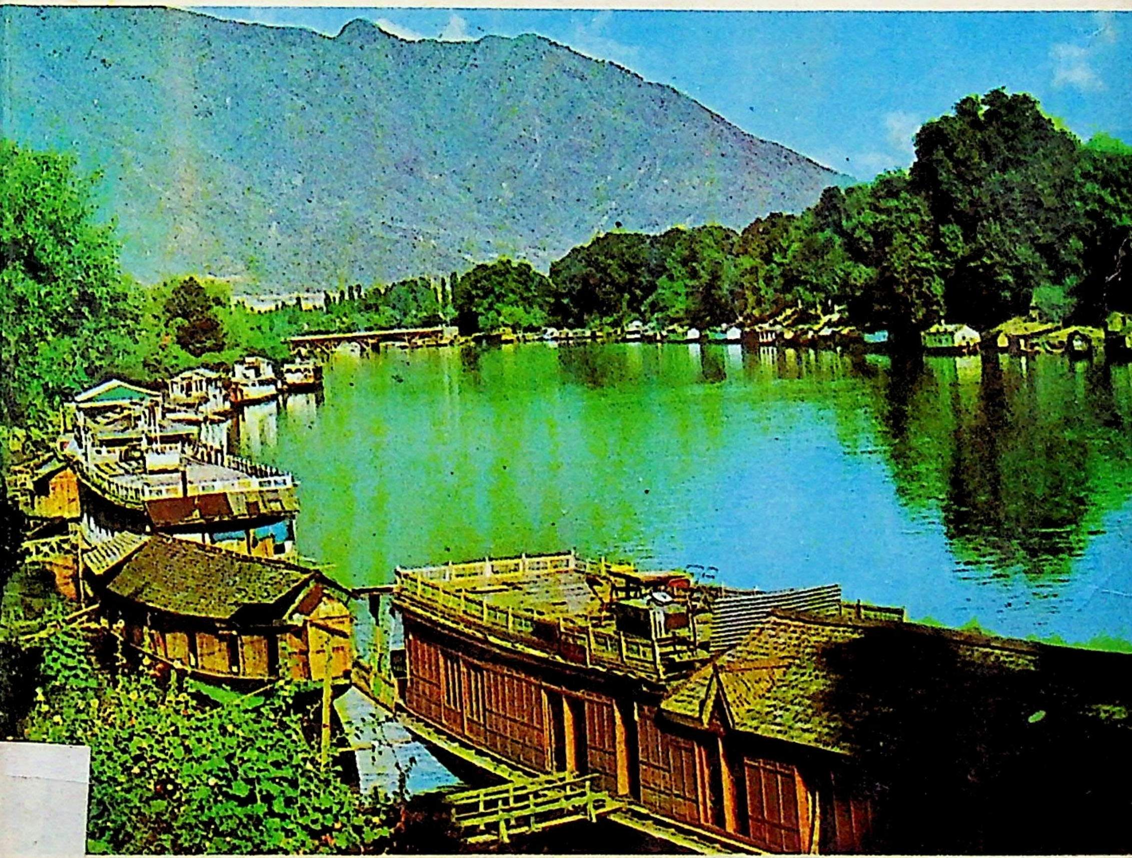
CULTURE AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF KASHMIR

Volume 1
Ancient Kashmir



P.N.K. Bamzai

ABOUT THE BOOK

The number of books written on Kashmir is legion. Most of them deal with the natural beauty of this "Paradise on Earth". However, little has been written on the people whose life and history are equally interesting for they have given to humanity thought and craft that added to its dignity, elegance and colour.

Kashmir has the unique distinction of having a long tradition of historical records, Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* being the sole history in Sanskrit literature. But these records follow the usual mode of presenting a list of kings, queens and their ministers or an account of their expeditions to neighbouring principalities. There is hardly any mention of the people who inhabit the land.

But in recent years the study of history has undergone a sea change. A book written on the old pattern which would barely mention Asoka the Great or Lalitaditya and his ephemeral empire would be as incomplete as those which ignore the social setting of political and intellectual history.

This book has been written with the object of giving a comprehensive story of Kashmir revolving round the common man's political, social and cultural life from prehistoric times to the present day.

Situated in a sensitive geo-political region where recently terrorism has raised its ugly head, Kashmir has attracted world attention. The genesis of this malady has been dealt with in detail. It is hoped the book will help the reader to understand the situation with all its ramifications.

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CULTURE AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF KASHMIR

Volume One

ANCIENT KASHMIR

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THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE
SOURCES OF KASHMIR HISTORY
EARLY HISTORY AND RISE OF NORTHERN BUDDHISM
IMPERIAL KARKOTAS AND LATER HINDU RULERS

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PREFACE

Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere,
With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave,
Its temples, and grottos, and fountains as clear,
As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave !

With these words Thomas Moore (18th century AD) introduced Kashmir to the Western world in his famous poem *Lalla Rookh*. His accent on its natural beauty and salubrious climate resulted in inducing a large number of Western travellers to visit Kashmir and write about it. But except the lakes and rivers, mountains and meadows, flora and fauna, there is not even a word on the people who pass to and fro across the charming Valley. How anomalous! Their travel diaries devoid of any social theme, read like guidebooks extolling the dual play of lakes and mountains in Greece but ignoring the great Greek civilisation. No wonder the Western perception of Kashmir during the 18th and 19th centuries was lopsided.

However, this was compensated by the writings of European scholars and savants like Buhler, Stein, Grierson, etc, who provided us a peep into the cultural treasures of the Kashmiris and their enormous contribution to Sanskrit language and literature, poetics, medicine, music, dance, drama, art and architecture. Later percolations from the Chinese and Tibetan texts revealed Kashmiris' role in the development of Mahayana and its propagation by Kashmiri missionaries in China, Central Asia and Tibet — Covering nearly half the population of the world.

But what about the common man? The historians too are of no help. Though Kashmir has the proud privilege of having the only history in Sanskrit *(Rajatarangini)* giving a running account of events from 3000 BC to 1149 AD, it contains of more than a list of kings, their queens and ministers, or their military expeditions to neighbouring principalities. There is practically no information on the people — their food, clothing and shelter, their days of joys

and sorrows or the ups and downs they went through during the course of centuries.

In recent years the study of history has undergone a sea change. Indeed a book which barely mentions Asoka the Great or Lalitaditya and his ephemeral empire would be as incomplete as those which ignore the social setting of political and intellectual history.

The present book has been written with the object of giving a comprehensive story of Kashmir involving the common man's social, economic and political life during the times gone by. This entailed a sustained input of labour and time in gleaning relevant facts from various sources.

A few historical discoveries which have been incorporated herein need a mention. These pertain to the origins of the land and people of Kashmir, development of Mahayana and its propagation by Kashmiri missionaries across the Himalayas, Sanskrit being the base of the Kashmiri language, the Chinar tree, (Booni or Bhawani), being an indigenous tree of Kashmir.

The recent appearance in the Valley of terrorism, sponsored by Pakistan, has given a new dimension to the situation in Kashmir. Located as it is in a sensitive geo-political region, the Valley has attracted the attention of the world to the various problems that India is facing over Kashmir. Should the present work help the reader to understand these problems and their ramifications, I will consider my effort being amply rewarded.

New Delhi,
17 January, 1994.

P N K Bamzai

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THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Projecting deep into the heart of Asia, Jammu and Kashmir, a component State of the Indian Union, covers an area of 222, 713 square kilometres, extending from 32° 17' to 36° 58' N. and from 73° 26' to 80° 30' E. Conveniently called by the shorter term 'Kashmir', the State includes besides the Valley, the areas of Jammu, Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza and Nagar.

Areawise the State is the second largest State in the Republic of India. However, its original area of 222, 713 square kilometres has undergone considerable change as a result of Pakistan aggression in 1947-48. At the cease-fire in 1949, 78,932 square kilometres of the state's territory remained under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. Another major change occurred when the People's Republic of China launched a massive attack on India in 1962 and forcibly occupied 37, 555 square kilometres of Indian territory in the Ladakh Division of the State. Later, Pakistan transferred 5,180 square kilometres of the State's territory under its illegal occupation to China.

According to the "line of control" agreed on in 1972, 83, 806 square kilometres in the north-west remained under the control of Pakistan and 138,992 square kilometres under Indian control.

With 4,616, 632 inhabitants residing in the area on the Indian side of the line of control, the State has the lowest density of population in India. For, unlike the vast plains of the rest of the country, Kashmir is mostly mountainous, rising in several tiers from the plains in the south to the high-altitude valleys and peaks in the north, enclosing some of the loftiest inhabited hamlets in the world. Obviously with such diversities of physical features, the State offers interesting variations in its soil, elevation, geological formation, climate, vegetation and the people. This diversity in aspect apart from having influenced and largely shaped the history of the State, is in itself an interesting study.

By virtue of its central position in Asia, Kashmir commands a strategic importance touching on the north-west Afghanistan, on the north, the Sinkiung-Uighur Autonomous Region of China, and on the west Pakistan. It stands on the old Central Asian trade route and the Kashmir Valley has, since ancient times, been the halting place of the caravans travelling between the plains of India and high reaches of Central Asia.

A detailed description of its geography is necessary to elucidate the pronounced variations found in the different aspects of the State. It begins from the strip of level land at the northern-most extremity of the plains of the Punjab. This strip has the same geographical features as the Punjab whence it continues. It does not extend long and the low ridges of the hills begin soon. These hills, spread over a large tract, constitute what is called the 'Region of the Outer Hills' or the 'sub-montane tract.' The hills run parallel to one another and vary in height from 610 to 1,219 metres above sea level. In between these rocky and rugged hills lie small narrow valleys.

In the east of this region flows the river Ravi and to its west the river Jhelum. Jammu, the winter capital of the State, stands on the spur of a hill overlooking the picturesque small Tawi river. Both the Tawi and the Ujh, another small river flowing nearby, are chiefly dependent on rain which often floods them during the monsoon. The Chenab issues from the mountains into the plains near the town of Akhnur, 29 kilometres to the north-west of Jammu and flows through parts of the Jammu district before entering the plains of the Punjab.

The Jammu district embraces the largest slice of this region. Jammu city is about 314 metres high from the sea and spreads over more than 2 kilometres. The prominent features of the city are its temples with pointed spires, and the imposing palace.

There are several towns in this region the important being Basohli, Ramkot, Ramnagar to the east of the Chenab and Akhnur to its west. Akhnur is a flourishing town situated close by the river Chenab and commands commercial importance owing to the navigability of the river there.

This region experiences tropical heat. The hot season lasts from April to June, followed by the rainy season from July to September. The intensity of the heat during summer corresponds to that of the plains in India. Winter sets in October and lasts up to March. The vegetation of the region is tropical. The produce of these districts varies according to their

altitude. Thus below 610 metres grow the crops as in the Punjab , such as sugar cane and plantain. Cotton thrives and on the sides of the hills maize, wheat and barley are extensively cultivated. The upper reaches of the hills are thickly covered with forests of pine and deodar. Lack of water is, however, responsible for frequent crop failures. Canals which have recently been built are fed by the Chenab and the Tawi. This region is rich in minerals and has already become the industrial belt of the State.

Region of the 'Middle Mountains'

The next natural division of the State lies between the 'Outer Hills' in the south to the lofty mountain ranges dividing the Kashmir Valley from Jammu. Aptly called the 'Middle Mountains' the elevation of this tract ranges from 1,219 to 3,658 metres above the sea. It comprises the valleys of Bhadrwah, Kishtwar and Padar. There is a luxuriant growth of vegetation all over this area. The forests are rich with silver fir, deodar, spruce, oak, and pine. The lower parts are cultivated wherever possible. The main crops grown are maize, rice, millet, barley and wheat. Cultivation in this area is dependent on rain which, however, is not enough for growing rice. Irrigational facilities are now being extended to this part of the State. Unlik the 'Outer Hills' ,snow falls there, and on higher elevations it stays long.

Among the valleys enclosed by these mountains, Bhadrwah is a place of interest. It stands at an elevation of nearly 1,646 metres above sea level. Its main charm lies in the rich forests abounding in the finest quality of timber. Another town of importance is Kishtwar. It is more or less a plateau. Fruits such as quince, apple, pear, plum, cherry and grapes grow here. Saffron is also cultivated but it is inferior in quality to that grown at Pampore in the Kashmir Valley.

Padar is a small valley of the Chenab not far from Kishtwar. The valley is rich in minerals. Sapphire mines are located at higher elevations. Other semi-precious stones like beryl and aquamarine and crystals like quartz and felspar are also to be found.

From the 'Middle Mountains' onwards one comes to the region of lofty mountains which enclose the basin-shaped valley of Kashmir. The broad outline of the mountain ranges of this most picturesque part of the State commences from the Pir Panjal range in the south and south-west of the Valley, varying in height from 2,438 to 4,572 metres. There are peaks on this range which rise to elevations from 3,901 (Kaunsar Nag) to 4,732 metres (Tratakoti) and the highest is that of Romesh Thong, also called the Sunset Peak.

Kashmir Valley

The celebrated valley of Kashmir, nestled securely among the Himalayas at an average height of 1,829 metres above the sea, is approximately 135 Kilometres in length and 32 to 40 kilometres in breadth. North, east and west, range after range of mountains guard the Valley from the outer world and in the south it is cut off from the Punjab by rocky barriers, 80 to 120 kilometres in width. The mountain snows feed the river Jhelum and the streams and it is calculated that the Jhelum in its course through the Valley has a catchment area of nearly 10,240 square kilometres.

Origin

There is a legend that the Kashmir Valley was aeons ago, a vast mountain lake called Satisar and geologists attest to this. That volcanic action had some share either in the formation of the original lake or its subsequent desiccation, is most probable and is to be traced in the mountains around the vale. The soil contains remains of fresh-water fish and fossil oysters — the black shells of the water-chestnut may be found in layers embedded in the earth at a height of 457 metres above the level of the Valley. These indicate a fluvial origin. Traces of beaches may also be seen on the sides of the mountains. The flat and uniformly even surface of *karewas* or plateaus can only be attributed to their having remained submerged for ages beneath the still, calm waters of a deep vast lake.

According to a tradition the drainer of this lake was an ascetic named Kashyapa; hence the reclaimed land was called Kashyap-pur or Kash-yap-mar and later Kashmir.

The ancient Greeks called it Kaspeiria[1], and in the classical literature Herodotus mentions it as Kaspatyros, and Hekataios calls it by the name of Kaspalyros or Kaspapyros. It is called Shie-mi in the narrative of To Yeng and Sung Yan (578 AD). Heun Tsiang who visited Kashmir in 631 AD calls it *Kia-shi-mi-lo.*

Kashmir has further been shortened into Kashir by the Kashmiris in their own tongue. The Tibetans call it Khachal (snowy mountain), and the Dards, Kashrat.

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1. A third fragment in Ptolemy (VII, 42) gives Kaspeiria as one of two provinces in Menander's home kingdom east of the Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi which would correspond to Southern Kashmir. See Tarn, *The Geeks i n India and Bactria,* p. 238.

A Mountain-Girt Valley

The mountains which surround Kashmir are infinitely varied in form and colour. To the north lies a veritable sea of mountains broken into white-crested waves hastening away in wild confusion to the great promontory of Nanga Parbat (8,056 metres). To the east stands Haramukh (5,200 metres), the grim mountain which guards the valley of the Sindh. Further south is Mahadeo, sacred to the Hindus, which seems almost to look down upon Srinagar, the lofty ranges of Gwash Brari (5,477 metres) and the peak of Amarnath (5,329 metres). On the south is the Pir Panjal range with peaks of 4,572 metres. Further north are the great rolling downs of the Tosamaidan (4308 metres), and in the north-west corner rises the Kajinag (3,730 metres), the home of the Markhor.

Where the mountains cease to be steep, fan-like projections with flat arid tops bare of trees run out towards the Valley. These plateaus are known as *karewas*. Sometimes they stand up isolated in the middle of the Valley, but whether isolated or attached to the mountains, the *karewas* present the same sterile appearance and offer the same abrupt walls to the Valley.

Kashmir is a land of lakes, rivers and flowers. For its fresh-water lakes and tarns, the country is celebrated all the world over. Those lying in the Valley against the charming mountain background are the Wular, the Dal and the Manasbal. The Wular lying in the north-east of the Valley is the largest fresh-water lake in India. It is 20 kilometres long and 8 kilometres broad. The Dal lake lies at the foot of hills to the east of Srinagar and is 6.43 kilometres long and nearly 3.2 kilometres broad. Against the mountain background which is reflected in its calm expanse, and enclosed by trees, the lake looks superb. The Manasbal lake is the deepest, its greenish-blue waters reflecting the hills which surround it.

Besides these lakes which are fed by the springs and melting snow streams trickling down the mountains, there are a number of tarns formed by glacial action.[2]

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2. Dr Arthur Neve who made close, on-the-spot observation on various mountain ranges states:
   "On the south side of Haramukh the glaciers only descend to about 13,500 feet but on the north 1,500 feet lower. They are fed by the large snow fields on the summit, which are of great thickness. The snow cliffs on the middle peak show a vertical thickness of nearly 200 feet. In all the surrounding valleys there are lakelets varying in size from mere ponds to sheets of water a mile or so in length and a quarter of a mile broad. Most of these occur at a height of about 11,500 feet. There can be no doubt that they are all due in some way to glacial action and that they are of not very remote age."

The lakes and lakelets found in the upper valleys around Haramukh are Gangabal, Lool Gool and Sarbal. They are at an elevation of nearly 3,692 metres above sea level. Gangabal lake with its shimmering waters is held sacred by the Hindus of Kashmir.

To the south-east of the Pir Panjal range lies the lovely lake of Kaunsar Nag (3,938 metres) fed by a glacier and surrounded by three peaks. It is said to be a source of the Jhelum river.

In the Lidder valley there are large glaciers like Kolahoi which is about 8 kilometres in length and comes down as low as 3,410 metres. From here to the east on the way to the Amarnath cave lies the Sheshnag at an elevation of 4,307.5 metres.

Thus the Valley seems to be a happy combination of mountains and lakes. There are numerous springs swarming with Himalayan trout and associated with the old snake worship which gives them sanctity.

No description of the Valley would be complete without a mention of its useful river, the Jhelum, which, rising at Verinag in the south and traversing the entire length of the Valley, escapes at Baramula as a roaring, foaming torrent. The Jhelum, known in the Valley as Vitasta, is its very life, supplying water to its field. The river is navigable without a single lock from Khanabal to Baramula, over a course of 164 kilometres and with its numerous canals and tributaries serves as a cheap means of transport through flat-bottomed boats ranging from the tiny *shikara* to a huge *bahats* (cargo boat).

Floods, Famines and Fires

Surrounded as it is by high mountains which accumulate on their higher reaches huge deposits of snow during winter, when the western monsoons are active, the Valley is liable to be inundated in summer when rain brings down melted snow in torrents, quickly filling low-lying parts of the bowl-shaped Valley. The catchment area has been calculated to be 186 kilometres long with a width that varies from 64 to 120 kilometres.

The only outlet for this is the narrow gorge at Baramula where the placid Jhelum leaves the smooth grassy banks and hurries headlong down its rocky course to the plains of the Punjab. This vulnerability to floods has been a major factor affecting the economy of the Valley and, in its long history, accounts of several floods which wrought havoc, destroying life and crops. Famines invariably followed and owing to the isolated nature of the Valley were often very deadly and prolonged.

Two other factors directly attributable to the physical formation of

the Valley, namely, earthquakes and fires, are also responsible for having caused repeated misery to its inhabitants.

There are several tracts of alluvium torrefied up to the surface to the condition of a well-burnt brick, which point to some form of igneous or volcanic action. The desiccation of the Valley is believed to have been caused by an earthquake which created an outlet for the lake waters through the Baramula gorge.[3]

No wonder that lurid accounts of earthquakes which caused enormous destruction of life and property fill several pages of the long history of Kashmir. These had far-reaching repercussions on the political, economic and social growth of the people.

Frequency of earthquakes necessitates the extensive use of timber in the construction of houses. Thanks to rich forests of deodar, pine and fir all over the Valley, timber is cheap and easily procurable. Constructed with this combustible material, houses catch fire quickly and history records several conflagrations which reduced whole towns and cities to ashes.

Srinagar, the capital of the State, situated in the centre of the Valley, stands on the banks of the Vitasta. One of the oldest cities in India, its history dates back to the time of Asoka who is credited with having founded it during his visit to Kashmir.[4] Srinagar with its numerous canals and the adjacent Dal Lake is aptly called the 'Venice of the East' and is a centre of trade and commerce.

Baramula towards the north-west of the Valley is a town of importance. It is here that the Vitasta after running a course of calm and navigable length in the Valley escapes as a rushing, foaming, torrent. Near Baramula is another town, Sopore, originally founded in the 9th century AD. It is a centre of wool industry and fruit. In the south of the Valley is the famous town of Anantnag. With its numerous springs, some of which have medicinal properties, Anantnag presents a picturesque look. Shopyan, the starting point of the old Mughal Road over the Pir Panjal range is famous as a centre of fruit trade.

The major occupation of the people is agriculture. Rice, wheat, barley and fruits are cultivated. Handicrafts and manufacture of woollens give employment to a fair proportion of the people who are known all the world over as the finest handicraftsmen of the East. The floral and faunal designs worked on shawls, carpets and papier

3. W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 42-43.
4. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, i — 104.

mache articles are the direct result of the beautiful surroundings in which the workers live.

Ladakh and Gilgit

Beyond the Valley are Ladakh, 'the land of the Lamas,' Baltistan and Dardistan. The whole region is mountainous. It is here that arctic cold is experienced. The population is sparse owing to the extreme climate and low production. The region is cut off by mountain barriers from other parts of the State and the communications till the other day were primitive and difficult.

Ladakh lies to the east of Kashmir Valley. The elevation of this part of the State varies from 2,460 to 4,615 metres above the sea. The mountains vary in height from 5,230 to 7,692 metres. The Karakoram ranges form the northern boundary of Ladakh. To the south lies the Ladakh range and further south the Zanskar range, the two being cut by the river Indus.

Between the various streams which drain the area rise ranges of mountains, those in the central portions attaining an elevation of 4,923 to 6,124 metres, while the mighty flanking masses of the Karakoram culminate in the great peak Godwin Austen (8,697 metres). The difference of the level in the valleys between the eastern and western tracts has its natural effect on the scenery. In the east, as in the Rupshu district of Ladakh, the lowest ground is 4,153 metres above the sea, while the mountains run very evenly to a height of 6,461 metres. The result is a series of long open valleys, bounded by comparatively low hills having very little of the characteristics of what is generally termed a mountainous country. To the west as the valleys deepen, while the bordering mountains keep at much the same elevation, the character of the country changes, and assumes the more familiar Himalayan look of massive ridges and spurs falling steeply into the deep valleys below.

The climate of Ladakh is rigorous. Nights are very cold and the days very hot. The position of mountains is quite opposite to the direction of winds and hence no rainfalls. There is very little snow on the mountains. Ladakhis mainly cultivate land in the valleys where it is fertile and irrigation is easy due to the river. Crops such as barley, wheat, buckwheat, peas, *grim*, rapeseed, beans and turnips are grown here. Apples and apricots flourish in some parts of the region.

Leh is the capital of Ladakh. It is an important centre of trade as the

caravan traders of Central Asia and of India meet here and exchange their commodities.

The Indus valley, known as Baltistan, covers an area of 16,957 square kilometres. It is bounded on the north by the Karakoram mountains, on the east by Ladakh, on the south by the Himalayas and on the west by Dardistan. There are very high mountains and side valleys in this part of the country. The valley of Shayok and the *illaqas* of Shigar and Skardu are well-populated. Its sub-divisions are Kharmang, Khaplu, Shigar, Skardu and Rondu. Shigar is a fertile part of the country. Khaplu is situated in the southern valley of the Shayok.

There is very little cultivable land here but fruits are sweet, specially grapes, melons and apricots. Caraway seeds are plentiful. The river Indus is crossed here in boats called *zak* made of inflated hides, but where it is narrow it is crossed by rope bridges. It is picturesque like other Himalayan valleys in respect of natural surroundings, except for the climate which is cold and rigorous in winter, hot and dry in summer. The snowfall is not heavy as it is in the Kashmir Valley. In summer, days are hot and nights cold. The mountains which range on its north and east are among the loftiest in the world. There are several hot springs and also several glaciers of which Baltoru is, except the ice-bound oceans of Arctic regions, the largest in the world.

Skardu is the capital town of Baltistan. Usually the whole area is called after the name of this town. The river Indus flows right through it and Skardu town stands on its banks at an elevation of 2,369 metres above the sea.

Dardistan extends in the north to the Karakoram and besides Gilgit, comprises Hunza, Nagar and the small principalities of Chilas, Yasin, Punial, Ghizar, Ishkoman and Koh. Chitral was a tributary of the erstwhile princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Gilgit is 359 kilometres from Srinagar by road over the Burzil pass above the northern bank of the Wular lake. Descending from the Burzil the whole scene changes. The forests and vegetation of Kashmir are left behind, the trees are few and of a strange appearance, and the very flowers look foreign. A little cultivation at Bunji relieves the eye; but there is nothing to cheer the traveller until the Indus has been crossed and 48 kilometres farther the pleasant oasis of Gilgit is reached.

The Indus valley is a barren, dewless country. The very river with its black water looks hot, and the great mountains are destitute of vegetation. The only thing of beauty is the view of the snowy ranges, and Nanga

Parbat. Gilgit (1,504 metres) itself is fertile and well-watered. The mountains fall back from the river, and leave room for cultivation on the alluvial land bordering the right bank of the Gilgit river, a rare feature in these northern highlands.[5]

The Karakoram range is of a far more complicated character. Broadly speaking, it is a continuation of the Hindukush, and forms the watershed between the Central Asian drainage and the streams flowing into the Indian Ocean. From its main ridge, lofty spurs extend into Kashmir, separating the various tributaries of the Indus. The result is a stupendous mountain mass 354 kilometres long, with a width on the south side of the watershed of 48 to 97 kilometres, and peaks averaging from 6,400 to 7,076 metres.

The head of every valley in the area is the birthplace of a glacier. Many of these are immense in size, such as the Baltoru, the Biafo and the Hispar.

Routes

None of the natural features of Kashmir geography have had a more direct bearing on its history than the great mountain-barriers that surround it.

The importance of the mountains as the protecting wall of the Valley has at all times been recognised both by the inhabitants and foreign observers. We find it alluded to by Kalhana who speaks of Kashmir as unconquerable by the force of soldiers, and of the protection afforded by its mountain walls.[6] Special notice has been taken by Heun Ṭsiang[7] and Ou-kong of the mountains, enclosing the kingdom and the difficulty of the passes leading through them. Alberuni does the same and shows us the anxious care taken in old days to maintain this natural strength by keeping strict watch over the passes.[8] Sharaf-ud-din, the historian of Timur, says of Kashmir: "This country is protected naturally by its mountains on every side, so that the inhabitants, without the trouble of fortifying themselves, are safe from the attacks of enemies."[9]

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5. *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XV, New Edition (1908), p.78.
6. *Rajatarangini*, i — 31-39.
7. See *Si-u-ki*, trans, Beal, i.p. 148.
8. Alberuni's *India*, trans. Sachau, i.p. 206.
9. See the extract from Sharaf-ud-din's *Zafarnama in Tarikh-i-Rashidi* trans. Elias and Ross, p. 432.

Road communications between the component parts of the State and with the rest of the country were quite primitive and restricted till as late as the beginning of the present century. Wheeled traffic was non-existent in the Valley.[10] Long distances and difficulties of terrain were, however, no bar to free movement and constant travels of the people over the Himalayas, for they had, by sheer economic pressure, to maintain the life-lines of commerce. It is natural that the inhabitants of an alpine country, enclosed by difficult mountains and accustomed to travel long distances, should develop marching powers.

Several routes leading out of the Valley towards the east, south and west, are mentioned in early chronicles as well as noticed by foreign travellers. These were the routes over the Zoji-la to Ladakh and thence to Central Asia and Tibet; to Gandhara (Kabul valley) through the valley of the Jhelum, which joined the caravan route from India to Western Asia near Taxila; and the routes over the Pir Panjal range including those over the Banihal, Pir Panjal and Tosamaidan passes to eastern and central Punjab and thence to the plains of India.

Route to Ladakh

The route over the Zoji-la was undoubtedly an important thoroughfare in ancient times. Caravans laden with cotton textiles, spices, and handicrafts travelled from the plains of India to Leh where they met the caravans coming from Central Asia and Tibet carrying tea, silk and shawl wool and traded them through barter and cash. Leh was thus an important centre of entrepot trade.

Zoji-la has more than once witnessed successful invasions of Kashmir. Through it came, early in the 14th century, the Turk Dulca and Bhautta Rincana, whose usurpation led to the downfall of Hindu rule in the Valley.[11] About two centuries later Mirza Haider Dughlat, with his small Mughal force, successfully fought here his entrance to Kashmir (1533 AD.)[12].

It is a long and difficult road from Leh to Yarkand, 779 kilometres, over the Khardung-la, the Sasser-la and the Karakoram passes between 5,230 and 5,846 metres altitude.

The route to Tibet passes through Rudok (4,092 metres), the frontier

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10. W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 23.
11. See *Jonaraja*, 42 Sqq.
12. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, trans. Elias and Ross, p. 423 Sqq.

post of Tibet, and crosses the Mariom-la (4,615 metres), the highest pass between Leh and Lhasa.

Route to Gilgit

The route to Gilgit from Srinagar(359 kilometres), after passing through the lovely Gurais valley beyond Bandipore, ascends the Burzil pass. Across the pass it is a bleak and rugged country, and when Astor (2,416 metres) is left, the sense of desolation increases. There is nothing to cheer the traveller, except a view of the Nanga Parbat, till one reaches the pleasant oasis of Gilgit.

Jhelum Valley Road

Being the shortest line of communication between the Valley and Hazara (ancient Urusha) and the Indus, the route through the Jhelum valley below Baramula was used from ancient times. Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong coming from Gandhara (Kabul valley) and Urusha (Hazara) followed this route on their way to Kashmir, and it was well known to Alberuni.

The Jhelum valley below Baramula is confined between two ranges of mountains — the one to the south being a branch of the Pir Panjal and the other to the north, of Kajinag. These two ranges accompany the course of the river with gradually lessening height for about 129 kilometres to a point near Muzaffarabad where the Jhelum makes its sudden bend to the south.

With the dawn of the 20th century the Jhelum valley road was built and opened to wheeled traffic. The road was joined with the Murree road at Kohala, 212 kilometres from Srinagar, and became, till the opening of the Banihal road between Srinagar and Jammu some years later, the life-line of the Valley. With the birth of Pakistan in 1947, and the occupation of this part of the valley by its forces, the road is blocked beyond Uri, 105 kilometres from Srinagar.

Banihal Road

Kashmir has the Banihal road as the only road link with the rest of India. The road pierces the Banihal pass through a 3.2 kilometres tunnel at an elevation of 2,215 metres and following the valley of the Chenab ends at Jammu, the railhead. The road is open all the year round, the new low-level tunnel obviating the necessity of driving over the top of the pass (2,769 metres) which remains snow-bound in winter.

The Banihal pass, owing to its low elevation, has always been a convenient route to the upper Chenab valley and the eastern hills of the Punjab. It takes its modern name from a village at the south foot of the pass which is mentioned by Kalhana as Banasala.[13]

Mughal Road

The Pir Panjal range has several passes leading to the Punjab. In the central part of the range is a low dip (3,500 metres) known as Pir Panjal Pass. the route which crosses it has, from ancient times, been the most frequented line of communication from Kashmir to the central part of Punjab. It is often mentioned by Kalhana.

With minor realignments here and there the Mughal Emperors built the Imperial Road over this route. The road is described in detail by Abul Fazal and later by Bernier who visited the Valley in the train of Aurangzeb.

Route to Poonch

The Tosamaidan pass, being on the most direct route between the Valley and Poonch, was of special importance from ancient times. It was over this route that Heun Tsiang continued his journey to places in the rest of India after his stay of two years in the Valley. The references to this route are found in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. It was twice in Kashmir's history that serious invasions were attempted over this route in 1015 and 1021 by Mahmud Ghazni and in 1814 by the forces of Ranjit Singh. Both, however, proved unsuccessful and the invading armies had to suffer loss and retire in utter confusion.[14]

The old route started from the village of Drang at the foot of the mountains 30° 57' lat. 74° 36' long. From here the road ascends over an easy slope to the edge of the Tosamaidan, a large upland plateau of undulating ground. After crossing the Tosamaidan, the route goes over gently sloping grassy ridges to the pass (4,000 metres). On its west it descends to the large village of Mandi and thence goes to Poonch.

The People

Jammu and Kashmir State is the home of various races and sects

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13. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini,* viii — 1655.
14. Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir.* See his trans. of *Rajatarangini,* p. 400.

whose history goes back to thousands of years. Many are the strange and interesting customs and social usages prevailing among them and any detailed account of their history would fill a volume. It would have to take into consideration ethnic and physical factors such as the diversity of race and religion. The vast mountain barriers and the network of rivers and hill-torrents cutting one part of the country off from another tend to restrict mutual intercourse and confine the various population groups within limited and isolated areas. Here only a bird's-eye view of the major sections of the population is possible.

Jammu

The hilly tract extending to the plains of the Punjab from the snowy mountains bounding the Kashmir Valley on its south is the home of the Dogras, a hardy people divided into several castes and sects both Hindu and Muslim. Belonging to the Aryan race, they speak the Dogri language, a mixture of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian words deriving its origin from the Indo-Aryan branch of Sanskrit.

There are numerous sub-castes among the Dogra population of Jammu, but a feature common to them all is their hardiness. Their staple food is rice, wheat and pulses. The observance of common festivals like Basant, Navroz, Sair and Dussehra testifies to an extraordinary spirit of tolerance and goodwill amongst both the Hindu and Muslim Dogras, as well as the members of other castes. They dress in a short coat or freely-flowing shirt, with pyjamas loose to the knees and tight-fitting downwards. The men generally wear a light turban and tie a kamarband at the waist. The women dress in a tight-fitting bodice or jumper with pyjamas similar to those of their menfolk and a shawl or a dupatta thrown over the head.

For the Brahmins of the Jammu province agriculture is the main source of income, and the calling of religious ministers and priests is confined to a comparatively small number of families. They are a peace-loving people and have always borne the hardships of life with a cheerful disposition.

The Dogra Rajputs are not big in physical stature; they average five feet four inches in height. Of slim build they have somewhat high shoulders and curiously bowed legs and, though not muscular, are active and untiring. Their complexion is a light shade of brown, rather darker than the husk of the almond. The women, because of their less exposure have a brighter tint. They possess well-formed features, composed of a slightly hooked nose, well-shaped mouth and small brown eyes.

In character the Rajputs are simple and can endure long marches and stand the cold climate well. Among the Muslim Rajputs, the Chibbalis and the Sudans are the chief sects. They are brave people and make the army their profession.

Khatris and Mahajans form the backbone of trade and commerce in the Jammu province. They are the men of judgment, and literacy has made great progress among both men and women.

Lastly, there is the class of Harijans called Meghs, Chamars and Doombs. The levelling influence of education which engenders tolerance and fellow feeling has, however, paved the way for a steady improvement of their social status. The Harijans are a community with clean habits and mostly follow the calling of agriculture.

The inhabitants of the region of the 'Middle Mountains' are a virile and active people called Paharis. Hardy and of powerful frame, they lead a rough life, eking out a sustenance by terrace cultivation on the slopes of the steep hills. Poor communications with the outside world and between the different villages, due to the difficulties of the terrain, have served to keep them poor. The language they speak is a mixture of Hindi, Punjabi, Dogri and Sanskrit words. They dress in grey woollen coats, with *kamarband*, and wear loose pyjamas. The women are clad in long gowns tied with a *kamarband*, their attire being completed by a cap and shawl. Into this region have come people from Kashmir Valley as settlers, inhabiting large tracts of the area and adopting the same dress. They speak a mixture of the Pahari and Kashmiri languages.

Another interesting hill people are the Gujjars. The climate and pastures of these altitudes are favourable for rearing cattle and sheep and from ancient times the Gujjars and their neighbours, the Gaddis, have been breeders. They lead semi-nomadic lives, moving in summer with their herds and flocks from the warm regions of Jammu to Kashmir, building their flat-topped houses on seemingly inaccessible heights and being everywhere perfectly at home with their animals. They are said to be Rajputs who migrated from Rajasthan and adopted the Muslim faith. Their language, Gujjari, is now definitely recognised to be a form of Rajasthani. Their outdoor life spent in some of the healthiest parts of the country and their nourishing diet of bread made from corn, with milk and butter as other constituents, result in their being a long-lived people.

Kashmir Valley

The people of the Kashmir Valley are physically a fine stock, the

men being tall and well-built. They are an ancient race with complexions varying from olive to a ruddy and fair hue. Their features are well-shaped and regular. Lively and intelligent, they are full of fun and fond of amusement. The beauty of their women has been long and much extolled.

Numerous explanations, some of them verging upon the fantastic, have been advanced to account for their origin. For example, one theory puts them down as being descendants of one of the lost tribes of Israel, this perhaps being suggested by the Jewish cut of features to be found among some of the older people who look the patriarchal type.

According to the legend, as mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* and the *Nilamatpurana*, the Valley which was a vast mountain lake was drained by Kashyapa Rishi. When desiccated the first settlers were the Nagas. They were snake worshippers and animists. A batch of Aryans originally settled on the banks of the mighty Vedic river Saraswati moved into the Valley when the river Saraswati dried up. This was about 5,000 years ago.

At the behest of Nila, the chief of the Naga tribe, they adopted several rites and festival of the Nagas. The festival of *Khichriamavasya* is still observed by Kashmiri Brahmins on the 15th day of the dark fortnight of *Pausa* (Dec-Jan) when *Khichri* is cooked in every house and kept outside in new earthen plates as present to the Pishachas and Yakshas.

A student of the *Rajatarangini* will have no hesitation to admit that before the advent of Islam in the 14the century the population of Kashmir was not entirely Brahmin. There are the names of several sects, namely, *Nishads, Khashas, Darads,Bhauttas, Bhikshas, Damaras, Tantrins,* etc, who constantly gave trouble not only to the rulers of the country but also to the Brahmins. How and wherefrom they came is a long study in itself.

Yet during the long and chequered history of Kashmir there have been periods when the people came in contact with the Roman, Greek and Persian civilizations resulting in a happy blending of cultures, at once tolerant and sympathetic towards the ideas and beliefs of others.[15]

The Kashmiris demonstrated it practically. When, for instance, Brahminism replaced the earliest forms of Naga worship there was the least tinge of religious persecution. On the other hand, the Nagas are even to this day venerated by the general populace in the various springs. Buddhism came into ascendency in the second century BC and in

15. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 155

contrast to the religious feuds in the rest of India it is found that the Buddhist kings and ministers building temples and *viharas* dedicated to Hindu as well as to the Buddhist deities. And when Buddhism had its day, the change was marked by a conspicuous absence of force or bigotry. In the 14th century AD Islam entered Kashmir and as usual the broad-minded Kashmiris welcomed its exponents. The synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religious thoughts found its greatest champions in Lalleshwari and Sheikh Nur-ud-din who are even to this day venerated by the Hindus and Muslims alike. During the darkest periods of religious persecutions by ignorant and fanatical outsiders, the people of Kashmir lived amicably together, giving what little solace, shelter and comfort they could to their brothers in distress.

The Brahmins popularly called Kashmiri Pandits, form a distinct class of their own and are considered to be the purest specimen of the ancient Aryan settlers in the Valley.[16] During numerous political vicissitudes, they suffered at the hands of religious persecutors when they had to leave the vally en masse for the plains. Subsequently during the long and peaceful reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin most of them returned to their original homeland. They studied the Persian language and regained their traditional occupation, namely, government service, which they continued to hold through the periods of Mughal, Pathan and Sikh rule. The newcomers assumed the appellation of *Bhanmasi* in contradistinction to *Malmasi* which the indigenous inhabitants had assumed. The *Malmasis* observe the 'lunar' and the *Bhanmasis* the 'solar' form of astronomical calendar. They, however, have no restriction with regard to intermarriage, etc. The *Karkuns* or government servants, having given up the study of Sanskrit in favour of Persian, employed their daughters' eldest sons as their priests who were called *Bhashyabhats*. In course of time the *Karkuns* and *Bhashyabhats* became two subcastes.

The Kashmiri Pandits are divided into 133 exogamous *gotras*, each member of which claims to be a descendant of a rishi whose name the *gotra* bears. Generally the social position is determined by the nature of occupation followed, rather than by the *gotra*. Those who have been employed in superior state service for two or three generations hold their heads high above others.

Claiming to be the offspring of Rishis and belonging to the highest order of Brahmins, the *Sarswats*, Kashmiri Pandits constitute a small community which is highly advanced in education, more than 70 per

16. Monier-Williams, *Modern India and the Indians*, p. 151.

cent of its members being literate. Their chief occupation is government service. In India many well-known administrators and politicians have been Kashmiri Pandits. In the field of art, philosophy and literature they have produced a galaxy of authors, savants and saints. They possess the knack of adapting to changed circumstances at short notice and have been adopting new avenues of profession.

The Sikhs are another small community. Before 1947 they were chiefly concentrated in Muzaffarabad district. Recent developments have forced them to migrate to other parts of the State. Most of them were originally Brahmins imported by Raja Sukh Jiwan (1754 AD) and were converted to Sikhism in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1819-39 AD). They are hardy people and mostly agriculturists. Recently they have taken to the military and police service of the State.

An overwhelming majority of the people in the Valley profess the Muslim religion. The advent of Iṣlam during the 13th and 14th centuries surely but slowly changed the social structure of the Kashmiris, but they maintained their traditions of love and tolerance.

"The Mussalmans of the Valley," says Lawrence, "may have retained, for some time after their conversion to Islam, some of the Hindu customs of endogamy within the caste and exogamy outside the *gotra*, but there is no trace of these customs now and the different tribal names or *krams* are names and nothing more."[17]

It is now possible for a *Dar* to Marry a girl of the *Ganai kram* and vice versa, provided both are agriculturists. There is, however, a sort of caste system prevalent, inasmuch as the members of one profession prefer to marry their sons and daughters among the followers of a similar profession. Thus, it is very rarely that goldsmiths *(sonar)* and blacksmiths *(khar)* contract marriages among themselves. The old *krams* or nicknames of *Pandit, Bhat, Dar,* etc, are, however, still retained and new ones also added by reason of the head of the family's or any of his ancestors' special calling or because of such peculiar circumstances which may have occurred to him.

"For instance", says Pandit Anand Koul, "a man, named Wasdev, had a mulberry tree growing in his courtyard and, therefore, he was called Wasdev Tul (mulberry). He, in order to get rid of this nickname, cut down the tree. But a *mund* (trunk) remained and people began to call him Wasdev Mund. He then removed the trunk of the tree but its removal resulted in a *khud* (depression) and henceforth people called

17. *The Valley of Kashmir,* p. 306.

him Wasdev Khud. He then filled up the depression but the ground became a *teng* (mound) and he was called thereupon Wasdev Teng. Thus, exasperated he gave up any further attempt to remove the cause of his nickname and it continued to be Teng which is now attached to the names of his descendants."[18]

The *Sheikh, Sayyid* and *Pirzada* are still considered to be *krams* of respectability among the Muslims. Mullahs or priests, though not numerous, are a class by themselves and every village has got a family or two to minister to the religious needs of the people and to officiate at the birth, marriage or death ceremonies. Recently they have taken to agriculture also but otherwise they live by the free gifts of grains bestowed on them by the villagers at harvest time.

The Muslim population of the Valley is divided into the Sunni and the Shia sects, the former being in a preponderating majority. In certain tahsils and villages there is, however, a concentration of Shias. They have monopolized the papier machie trade and during the hey-day of the shawl industry most of the factories were owned by them.

Chaupans, the hereditary shepherds who tend the sheep and cattle of the villagers during the summer months by taking them to green pastures on the various *margs* or meadows on the mountains, are a class of cheery, active men strictly marrying among themselves and not allowing any outsider to usurp their hereditary calling. They have a most characteristic whistle and their healthy robust life in the high mountains makes them a lovable people. The Chaupans have some knowledge of simple herbs and bring them down for the poor villagers. In winter and early spring they live in the villages, where sometimes they possess a little arable land. Just like the Mullah the Chaupan gets his remuneration at the time of harvesting of crops in the shape of grains and cash.

The Bands or Bhagats correspond to the Mirasis in India and carry on the profession of singing and dancing and sometimes go in bands to perform short comic plays in different villages. They add piquance and gaiety to the otherwise dull and monotonous life of the villagers and are in great demand at marriage and other festivities.

The people with whom the visitors to the Valley generally come in contact are the *hanjis* or boatmen of Kashmir. They are an ancient race and the *Rajatarangini* often mentions the *Nishads* (boatmen) and boat bridges.[19] It is generally believed that they were Kshatriyas before their

18. *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p. 20
19. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, v — 101.

conversion to Islam. They still disdainfully refer to a novice at boatcraft as a Shudra. There are many classes of boatmen generally according to the boat they ply and live in. The *bahts* (barge) boatmen have recently taken to timber and grain trades and with the rise in their standard of life have acquired a respectability over other *hanjis*. The *doonga* and houseboat *hanji* looks cleaner and can speak English and Hindustani fairly well. He is intelligent and at a very short notice can perform the duties of an accomplished butler or an expert cook, a seasoned shikari or an experienced guide. Most of the visitors owe their happy and troublefree holiday in the Valley to the *hanji* though he is more sinned against than sinning. There are other classes of *hanjis*, for example, *Dal hanji* who carry vegetables from the garden to the market. The *Gari hanji* are those who collect the *singhara* (water-chestnut) from the Wular lake. The *Gada hanji* or fishermen are well known for their close communal feelings and generally support their brothers in distress.

The Kashmiri language has been erroneously placed by Dr Grierson in the Dardic branch of non-Sanskritic languages in his *Linguistic Survey of India* (Vol.VIII, Part II). This view about the Kashmiri language is contrary to the popular and local belief that Kashmiri was originally the language of Brahmins and has grown out of Sanskrit. There is no script of its own but the Kashmiri language has a vast store of rich proverbs, sayings and folklore. There are some epic poems rendered into Kashmiri, as well as a good number of lyric poems. Recently the Persian script has been adapted for its use and Kashmiri literature is growing in quantity as well as in quality.

The dress of the Kashmiris comprises a long loose cotton or woollen smock, buttoning at the front and falling to the ankles. There is very little difference between the *phiran* (smock) worn by men and women. A pyjama of the loose type is generally worn under the *phiran* and this is all the dress of an average villager. Women wear a skull cap surrounded by a fillet of red colour in the case of Muslim and of white in the case of Pandit women. A shawl or a white *chaddar* thrown gracefully over the head and shoulders, more as a protection from the sun than to hide the features, completes their headgear. The Pandit women have now discarded the *phiran* and adopted the sari. Men wear a turban as a sign of respectability and affluence. The ordinary peasant is content with wearing the long pointed skull cap. In winter a *kangri* is taken under the *phiran* to keep oneself warm. This ingenious little stove consists of an earthen jar of about six inches diameter covered with a basket of wickerwork. Charcoal cinders of a special type are put in it to give a constant and continuous warmth.

The staple food of the Kashmiris is rice. They take plenty of vegetables but the favourite is the *hak* or *karam sag*. In the cities mutton is consumed in large quantities but in the villages where it was a luxury reserved only for festive occasions, mutton has slowly replaced vegetables. Though living in a cold region, Kashmiris abhor the use of liquor. They have, however, found a cheap and harmless substitute in tea which they take often. Its preparation is also quite distinct, salt being used instead of sugar. Green leaves are boiled hard and to give it a pink colour a pinch of bicarbonate of soda is added. Every time is tea time in a Kashmiri home and the samovar is generally steaming hot throughout the day. It would be sheer discourtesy to allow even an odd visitor to leave the house without serving him with a hot piping cup of pink-coloured tea.

A Kashmiri is noted for his hospitality as much as for his patient hard work. He is a clever craftsman, his wares decorating many a house and palace throughout the world. He used to be kind to his wife, children and everyone. "Theft in the villages is uncommon and crime against person negligble." Alas! With the outbreak of militancy in the Valley in 1989-90, this is no longer true.

Rituals and Ceremonies

Coming from the same stock and possessing a common cultural heritage, the people of Kashmir have many resemblances in dress, social customs and ceremonies though grouped among themselves as the followers of two different faiths. These resemblances in certain social customs are even connected with birth, marriage and death. The sacred shrines of both the communities are situated close together and it is a frequent occurrence that the fairs at these shrines are also held on the same date. The system of *khanadamadi,* a variant of the Hindu custom of adoption, is prevalent among both the communities. In all the important social functions of a Hindu his Muslim friends and neighbours take a keen and personal interest and vice versa.

Recently these ceremonies and rituals have undergone changes among both the communities due to the impact and influence of modern education and economic strains and stresses. For instance, the old system of having a grass bed for the mother at the time of her confinement has been generally discarded, thanks to the efforts of the medical practitioners who have brought home to the people the dangers of this insanitary practice. Similarly, having costly and decorative dresses for the groom and display of fireworks on festive occasions have been

given up; and it is generally found that the sumptuous and prolonged feasts with their bad economic results are things of the past.

Hindu Customs and Ceremonies

Among the Kashmiri Pandits the birth of a male child is generally hailed with joy, while that of a girl evokes little or no pleasure, for there is the custom of costly dowries. For eleven days after a child's birth the family and near relatives cannot perform any religious ceremonies. On that day, the mother of the child leaves her room. On the eleventh day a purification ceremony, the *kahnethar*, takes place. A *havan* is performed and the child given a name. Before this, however, on the sixth day after confinement, both the mother and the child are bathed. The bath called the *shran sundar* being over, lighted torches of birch-bark are passed round the head of the child and all persons present. The oldest lady of the house does this, all the while repeating the phrase "shokh ta punasun" (happiness and more children).

The *Yagnopavit* or sacred-thread ceremony is one of the most important ceremonies in the life of a Kashmiri Pandit. The sacred thread is put round the boy's neck by his guru and thenceforth he becomes a twice-born Brahmin. From his relations, he begs alms for his guru. A few days earlier, the *garnavai* (house cleaning), *manzirat* (dyeing of the boy's hands with henna) and *devagon* (bath and anointment) ceremonies are performed. Relatives and friends invited to the accompanying feast generally make cash presents to the parents. The women sing songs daily after the *garnavai* ceremony. On the day following the main ceremony, a *kushalhoma* is performed to mark the safe and pleasant termination of this important event. The guests then return to their homes.

The marriage or *vivah* ceremonies of the Hindus begin with the *garnavai* or house-cleaning. The *manzirat* and *devagon* follow. On the wedding day, the bridegroom is dressed in an *achkan* and a pyjama and dons a coloured turban. A procession is formed in the courtyard of his home, where he takes his stand on the *vyug* (an outline of mystic signs drawn in lime and coloured clay). The eldest lady then comes out and waves lighted lamps and releases a pair in a circle round his head, while the assembled relations join in song and shower coins and sugar candy over him. The bridegroom is then taken to the house of the bride. Outside the bride's home too, the *vyug* ceremonies are performed and the wedding party is treated to a sumptuous feast. The *lagan*, or nuptial ceremony is officiated by the family priests of both the bride and bridegroom who, hand in hand, walk seven times round a lighted fire,

the priests reciting *mantras* all the while.

After the *lagan*, the bride and the groom return to the latter's home. The bridegroom's sister is the recipient of a good present in cash on this occasion. The next night, the newly-married couple again go to the house of the bride's parents, where the groom received presents from them in cash and kind. During the first year of marriage the bride's father sends her a number of such presents at festivals and on her husband's birthday.

Most of the ceremonies on the death of a Kashmiri Pandit are similar to those performed by the Brahmins in the rest of India, though in Kashmir these are more elaborate. The dead body is washed and wrapped in a white shroud. A brief *shradh* ceremony is performed before the dead body is carried to the cremation ground. Previously the ceremony was more elaborate, taking in some cases five to seven hours. Before the dead body is put on the pyre, a *nirvana* ceremony with invocations to the Yama and chanting of hymns and mystic sounds is performed. The funeral pyre is lit by the son of the deceased or by the nearest relative. After the dead body is consumed by fire, the mourners return. Before entering the house a fire is lighted at the *ghat* round which the mourners walk after taking a bath in the river. For the next ten days *shradh* ceremonies are performed at the *ghat* every morning and on the tenth day the son or the chief mourner shaves his head to indicate the end of mourning. On the 11th and 12th days and then every month for the first year, more *shradhs* are performed. In all these ceremonies the priests are paid in cash and kind for officiating at these ceremonies spread over a year.

Festivals

The Kashmiri Pandits hold customary ceremonies on many religious festivals. The most important of these is the Shivratri. It commences from the first day of the dark fortnight of Phalguna (Feb-March). From the fifth to the ninth day, house-cleaning and washing of the clothes is done. On the tenth day cash present according to the customary scale are sent to the daughters. On the 13th day the head of the family keeps a fast and worships Shiva at night. The 14th is the feast day. The elders are offered presents of sugar candy or fruit by the younger ones, and cooked rice and meat are sent to the daughters. On the 15th or first day of the succeeding fortnight, walnuts consecrated at the worship are distributed among relations and friends.

Sont or the Spring Festival is celebrated on the 15th of March every year. A basket of paddy, with bread, a rupee, a pen-case, a cup of curds, a few walnuts, cooked rice and some flowers are kept overnight and seen

the first thing in the morning on waking up by the inmates of the house. Each picks up one or two walnuts which are dropped in the river after bathing. Generally a fair is held in some open ground of the village or city where the youngsters play games and the women enjoy the new blossoms and the warm sunshine.

Navreh or the New Year's day falls on the first day of the bright fortnight of *chaitra* (March-April) and the custom of paddy etc, being seen in the morning as on *Sont* is observed.

There are several festivals celebrated by the Kashmiri Pandits chief among which are the Baisakhi, *Jeth Astmi* (when a *mela* is held at Khirbhawani), *Har Nawmi, Pun,* when offerings of sweet bread are made to Goddess Lakshmi, etc.

Ceremonies of the Muslims

Many of the ceremonies connected with the birth of a Muslim child are akin to those among the Kashmiri Pandits. For instance, visiting shrines, calling the aid of saints and *derveshes* and keeping religious fasts by childless parents in order that they might be blessed with children are common customs. One or two months prior to confinement, the young wife generally goes to her parents' house where she gives birth to the child. Immediately after the event the Mullah comes in and whispers the *Azan* welcoming the new arrival to this world of faith, and then he repeats in the child's left ear the *Takbir* and adds a warning that death is the end of all things. On the seventh day which is known as the *sundar* day, the mother bathes and the child is given its name. Next day the barber is called in and shaves the child's head, and the neighbours and relatives are entertained to a feast. Two or three months later the mother returns to her father-in-law's house carrying with her presents from her father.

At the age of four or five years the boy is circumcised and this is an occasion of great rejoicings and festivities. The child's feet are dyed with henna on the manzirat night and the relatives and friends invited to a good feast. For seven days before the ceremony, singing and feasting continues and on the day of circumcision the child is placed on a basket under which a cock is cooped, the perquisite of the barber who performs the operation.

The Muslims generally marry their daughters to a near relation, and if this is not possible, they ask a man of their own tribe who has more sons than money, for a boy whom they take into their house *(khana-damad)*.

If a marriage with a near relative cannot be arranged, the father of a

girl calls for the services of a go-between. When a suitable match has been found the ceremony of betrothal is held. The boy's father goes with a small party of relatives and friends with presents to the girl's house and is entertained there. After the feast the priest, in the presence of the party, announces the betrothal, and sometimes commits the contract to writing. Afterwards on the four chief Muslim holy days: Id Ramadan, Id Qurban, Miraj Sharif, and Urs Nabi, the boy's father sends presents to the girl which, in the case of high class gentry, are reciprocated with bigger presents to the boy from the girl's father.

For a week before the wedding, festivities and rejoicings are held in the houses of both the boy and the girl and invitations are issued to relatives and friends. The day before the marriage, the boy's father sends henna dye to the bride who paints her hands and feet with the red colour. On the wedding day the bridegroom, after a bath, dresses himself up like a sultan. His relatives give him presents of money, and then he and his party set off, riding or walking. First they visit some neighbouring shrine and say their prayers and then do reverence to the graves of the bridegroom's father or grandfather. After that they make for the bride's house sending ahead presents and the palanquin in which the bride will return. As they draw near the bride's house the women of the bride's party come out, singing the song of welcome and praising the bridegroom's qualities. When the whole party is assembled, the gorgeous groom sits on cushions and the feast commences, to be wound up with tea. After the feast, the Qazi proceeds to business and if the marriage contract was not written before, he writes it out, receiving a few rupees for his pains. Before this is done, however, the fathers of the two contracting parties fix the amount of *mehar* or dowry according to the custom of the family.

After the *nikah* the bride carried by her brother or maternal uncle into the palanquin and followed by a party of singing women, departs with her husband. In her father-in-law's house she is received with great enthusiasm and parties of singing women come out to greet her. The bride remains for seven days in her new home after which she returns to her father's house. It generally takes months before the father of the girl is able to invite his son-in-law to a feast at his house where he receives cash presents, etc. The bride also generally goes with him and then there is no bar to their coming or going.

It is interesting to note that both among the Hindus and Muslims the groom is called the 'Maharaja' and the bride the 'Maharani.'

The ceremonies connected with the death of a Muslim are simpler

than those of a Pandit. At the time of death the *kalma* and some verses from the Quran are pronounced into the ear of the dying man. Those around call on the name of God and break into weeping when be breathes his last. The corpse is then bathed and wrapped in a shroud and carried to the graveyard in a wooden coffin which can readily be procured from a nearby mosque. The burial is accompanied with recitation of the holy verses from the Quran and other sacred books. The mourners then pray for the peace of the soul of the departed and return to their homes. For some days till the coming Friday, the chief mourner visits the grave daily with the Mullah and offers prayers. On the following Friday, all the friends and relatives of the departed gather at the grave and offer *fatiha* or prayers. They then return to the house of the chief mourner and are served with light refreshments. For a year or two, the Mullah receives alms from the house of the departed on certain Muslim holy days. The graveyard is planted with iris, tulips, narcissi and various spring flowers.

The Muslims of the Valley are very fond of celebrating their holy festivals with great eclat. On the Id day they don their new clothes and attend mass prayers in the Idgah of the towns and villages. Presents are exchanged between relatives and friends. Married daughters and their husbands receive a greater share of these presents. Feasts are held and sumptuous dishes served.

The people visit holy places like Tsrar Sharif, Mukhdoom Sahib, Rishi Mol, etc, particularly during the annual fairs. Thousands gather and enjoy the shopping provided by many hawkers dealing in things useful to a householder — baskets, earthen vessels, blankets, cotton goods, cheap jewellery, toys, etc. There are also spring and autumn festivals when cultivators offer prayers for getting a good harvest. These *melas* provide a pleasant relief to the otherwise dull life of a villager, and both young and old look forward keenly to their return.

Frontier Districts

To the north of the Valley is the region called Dardistan inhabited by broad-shouldered, moderately stout-built, well-proportioned and active highlanders. They are not particularly handsome but have a good cast of countenance with hazel or brown eyes.

"The word 'Dard'," says Sir George Grierson, "has a long history and the people bearing the name are a very ancient tribe who are spoken of in Sanskrit literature as Darada. The Greeks and the Romans included

in the Dard country the whole mountainous tract between the Hindukush and the frontiers of India."[20]

Because of its strategic position this region has always been coveted by different kingdoms on its borders. But the Dards managed to maintain their independent status till the middle of the last century when Maharaja Gulab Singh and his son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, finally subjugated them. They are the followers of the Sunni and Shia tenets of Islam. The people of Hunza are followers of Ali Ilahi faith. Before conversion to Islam, the Dards were followers of Buddhism and even to this day traces of Buddhist influence can be found in most of their customs and rituals. There are still some villages in the side valleys which follow the Buddhist religion. That the cultural influences from Kashmir extended to this region and beyond is now amply proved by the recent discovery in this part of the country of birch-bark manuscripts in the Sarda script.

The whole region of Dardistan is barren and except for small patches of vegetation near mountain torrents, little can be produced elsewhere. Wheat, barley and *grim* are grown and form the staple food of the people. It is, however, a deficit area in food. Fruits, particularly grapes, are grown in the Gilgit town proper.

Since they live in a cold region the Dards dress in a woollen coat with a *choga* or a long coat thrown over the shoulders. The pyjamas are worn lose. The cap is a sort of a deep bag with its sides rolled up and fitting the head closely.

The region to the north-east of the Valley is called Baltistan. Being situated in between Ladakh and Dardistan, there has been a mixture of the two races resulting in Baltis being a little taller than the Ladakhis. Although the preponderant majority of the population profess the Muslim faith of the Shia sect, there are still some villages professing the Buddhist faith.

The Baltis are a people of good cheer and great patience. Being of a prolific nature owing to the prevailing custom of polygamy, they are forced to seek labour in far off places in the rest of India, their own land being too barren to support a large population. They wear a short woollen coat and trousers and a small round cap. Kashmiris call this region *Tsera* (apricot) *Bhautun* because of the abundance of apricots cultivated there

20. *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II. The seat of the Dards, which does not seem to have changed since the time of Herodotus, extends from Chitral and Yasin, across the Indus, regions of Gilgit, Chilas and Bunji to the Kishenganga valley to the immediate north of Kashmir.

and sent in dry form to the markets in the rest of India.

Further to the east is the magic land of Ladakh, the home of the ancient Bhauttas. They have a Turanian cast of features. They are a guileless people and it is a joy to sit in their company and partake of their hearty laughter and hospitality. They rarely quarrel or lose temper even when they might be under the influence of their common beverage — the Chhang. They are clad in long woollen coats of grey colour with broad girdles of blue, red or orange, and velvet caps of various colours, red, blue green or even black with red lining. The women have a headdress of red cloth covering also the neck and back and closely studded with turquoises and brooches. On either side these are balanced by large earlaps of black fur. The poorer people wear long and thick black coats and trousers. Over-all coats of goat-skin are worn. Long boots of thick felt with a leather slipper for the sole are a peculiarity of this region.

The majority of the inhabitants are cultivators. A Ladakhi village has invariably a small or a big *gompa* or monastery according to its size. Every *gompa* maintains a number of monks and nuns presented to it by their parents in their childhood and dedicated for life to its service. Most of these monasteries are rich and contain valuable collections of old manuscripts chiefly on the Buiddhist religion.[21]

The staple food of the Ladakhis is *grim* which is ground into flour and eaten mixed with tea and butter as a rough paste or in the form of bread. Although professing the Buddhist faith, the Ladakhis are non-vegetarian. Being inhabitants of a cold region they drink a kind of country liquor called Chhang which is brewed from *grim.*

21. Cunningham, *Ladak; Physical, Statistical and Historical.*

2

SOURCES OF KASHMIR HISTORY

The sources from which a knowledge of the early and medieval history of Kashmir is derived may conveniently be divided into two broad categories: the rich collection of indigenous records, traditions, and archaeological and numismatic finds; and to augment and corroborate these, the notices in foreign chronicles, records of travellers, as also recent archaeological discoveries in places adjoining the borders of the State.

Historical Traditions

It has often been complained that ancient India had never known the study of history as had Greece or Rome. "We have to admit that the literary genius of India, so active and fertile in almost all conceivable branches of study, was not applied to chronicling the records of kings and the rise and fall of States and nations."[1]

It is, however, refreshing to turn to Kashmir where, of all the literature covering varied branches of Sanskrit scholarship in which Kashmiris distinguished themselves, the production of an uninterrupted series of written records of its history, reaching back beyond the medieval times, is the most outstanding. Writing of history seems to have been a traditional art. There is no less an authority than Kalhana himself (12the century AD) to testify to the existence in his time of at least eleven earlier compositions on the history of Kashmir which he consulted to write his own immortal *Rajatarangini*. It is learnt from him that there had been extensive works of ancient date containing the royal chronicles of Kashmir. In his time, however, these did not exist and he attributes their loss mainly to the composition by Suvrata of a popular abstract which led to the neglect and subsequent loss of most of these earlier works.

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1. The *Vedic Age*, ed. by R.C. Mazumdar, p.47.

Kalhana mentions by name some of the compositions on the history of Kashmir which he consulted — Kshemendra's *Nrapavali,* chronicles of Padmamihira and Chavillakaran and the *Nilamatpurana*. Padmamihira had, according to Kalhana, obtained his information on earlier kings from Helaraja who had composed a 'List of Kings' *(Parthivavali)*. Excepting the *Nilamatpurana* all the "eleven works of former scholars containing the chronicle of kings" which he consulted are now lost and this invests the *Rajatarangini* with an added importance as the sole historical record in Sanskrit literature.

Nilamatpurana which Kalhana used as one of his sources of information claims to give the sacred legends regarding the origin of the Valley, and the special ordinances which Nila, the lord of Kashmir Nagas, had revealed for his worship, and rites to be observed by the people to ward off the evil intentions of Pishachas. Portions of this ancient text dealing with the description and legends of various *tirthas* in the Valley help in reconstructing the ancient geography of Kashmir. Kalhana admits having taken from this source some royal names of the early period. Professor Buhler held that the *Nilamatpurana* in its present form could not be older than the sixth or seventh century AD.[2]

For further elucidation of the ancient geography of Kashmir which helps in following Kalhana's narrative, there are fortunately more sources. Kashmir has, since early times, been pre-eminently a region of holy sites and places of pilgrimage of all kinds. There are numerous texts known as *Mahatmyas* — more than 50 in number — on the important *tirthas*. Apart from giving legends regarding the origin of a particular *tirtha* and its importance as an object of pilgrimage, these *Mahatmyas* throw considerable light on the historical topography of the Valley.

Among the texts dealing specially with the sacred sites of Kashmir is the *Haracaritacintamani*. It is not like the *Nilamatpurana* or the *Mahatmyas* an anonymous composition, but its author, Jayadratha, belonged to the family of Rajanakas and lived about the end of the 12th or beginning of the 13th century. The local names as recorded by Jayadratha agree closely with those of the *Rajatarangini*.

Kuttanimata Kavya written by Jayapida's court poet (eighth century AD) contains a vivid picture of the contemporary social and economic life in the Valley.

The polyhistor Kshemendra (11th century AD) to whose work,

2. *Report*, p. 10,

Nrapavali, Kalhana refers, is a helpful author, portraying the socio-political life of Kashmiris of his time. Kshemendra was of wealthy parentage, well educated, and had travelled extensively abroad. It is unfortunate that his historical work *Nrapavali* is lost, but his *Desopadesa* caricatures the daily life of different sections of the people of the Valley, such as cheats, misers, prostitutes, bawds, ostentatious voluptuaries, students, degraded Saiva gurus and so on. The misrule and oppression prevalent in his time and earlier is depicted in his satirical poem *Narmamala*. His *Lokaprakasha* is a handbook which throws light on the life of the people and the prevailing administrative set-up. It contains specimens of bonds, *hundis*, contracts, official reports and the like.

One of Kshemendra's poems, intended to describe the snares of worldly tempations, is *Samayamatrika*, which throws considerable light on the prevailing conditions — social and economic — of Kashmir. Describing the rakish progress of a courtesan all over the Valley, he gives vivid descriptions of places she visits and the people she comes across. Most of these places can be easily traced on the map. More than once curious touches of true local colour impart additional interest to these references. To this poem, for example, we owe the earliest mention of the Pir Panjal Pass.

To Bilhana another aspect of the sketch of topographical interest is owed. He left his native land early in the reign of king Kalasa (1063-89 AD) and after long wanderings became famous as the court poet of the Calukya king Tribhuvanmalla Parmadi in the Deccan. In the last canto of his historical poem, the *Vikramankadevacarita*, Bilhana gives a glowing picture of the beauties of the capital of Kashmir, which though laudatory in nature, is exact in local details. In another passage the poet describes his rural home and its surroundings at the village of Khonamusha (modern Khonamuh) 15 kilometres to the south of Srinagar.

Similar in character, though less ample in detail, is the description of Kashmir and Pravarapura (present Srinagar), its capital, which Mankha, Kalhana's contemporary, inserts in the third canto of his *Srikanthacarita* (written between 1128-44 AD). Here one has the advantage of a commentary written by Jonaraja, the Chronicler (15th century AD), which duly notices and explains the points of local interest.

The Rajatarangini

And then there is the famous *Rajatarangini* written in Sanskrit verse by Kalhana in 1148-49 AD. "This is the only work in ancient Indian

literature that may be regarded as a historical text in the true sense of the word. The author has not only taken great pains to collect his material from the existing chronicles and other sources, but, at the beginning of his work, he has set down a few general principles for writing history which are remarkably far in advance of his age. Indeed, these may be regarded as anticipating to a large extent the critical method of historical research which was not fully developed till the nineteenth century AD."[3]

The *Rajatarangini* comprises in eight cantos of Sanskrit verse the history of the various dynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest period down to the time of the author, who began to write his work in 1148 AD. Allowing for the legendary character of some of the events mentioned in the first three cantos, Kalhana's work still retains a connected account of Kashmir history which has stood the test of historical criticism well. It can be accepted as a reliable record from the seventh century onwards, and steadily increases in detail and interest as we approach the time of the author.

"*The Rajatarangini,*" observes Jawaharlal Nehru, "is a rich storehouse of information; political, social and to some extent economic."[4] It is not only a work of serious contribution to history, but also a work of art. "In one long series, as if on a band of gelatine of a cinematograph film, Kalhana brings before our eyes vivid pictures of a byegone age, through episodes which contain the different *rasas* or sentiments of love and heroism, of pathos and marvel."

As early as the 15th century, King Zain-ul-abidin had it translated into Persian. Later, under orders of Akbar, Abul Fazl incorporated long abstracts in his *Ain-i-Akbari*. Bernier who visited Kashmir in 1665 makes a mention of it in his *Letters*. Moorcraft obtained a copy of the *Rajatarangini* during his visit to the Valley in 1823 AD.. This copy was translated into French by M. Troyer. Later several European scholars worked on its translations but were handicapped for want of a reliable text. Finally, through the efforts of Dr Buhler, such a text was found in Kashmir and this formed the basis of Dr Stein's monumental translation of the Chronicles published in 1900. In 1935, R.S. Pandit brought out his English translation of the *Rajatarangini* laying emphasis on its poetic and literary qualities.

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3. The *Vedic Age*, ed. by R.C. Mazumdar, p. 49.
4. Introduction to R.S. Pandit's *River of Kings*, p. XII.

Kalhana

Kalhana has shared the fate of so many Indian authors of note whose memory lives solely in their works. There is no record of the life of this scholar-poet to whom a knowledge of ancient Kashmir is owed.

From the indications scattered through the narrative, however, we can gather some instructive facts regarding the author's personality and the time and surroundings in which he lived.

Kalhana, according to his own statement, wrote his work during the years 1148-49 AD.[5] His description of the events which occurred during the troubled years 1112-21 AD imply personal observations made with a mature mind. Dr Stein, therefore, places his date of birth about the beginning of the 12th century.

The commencement of this century is marked in the history of Kashmir by an important dynastic revolution which brought about material changes in the political state of the kingdom. King Harsa (1089-1101 AD), who seems at first to have secured a period of consolidation and peace, subsequently fell a victim to his own Nero-like propensities. Heavy fiscal exactions necessitated by a luxurious court, and the cruel persecution by the Damara clan who formed the landed aristocracy, led to a rebellion under the leadership of the brothers Uccala and Sussala, two relatives of Harsa, who succumbed in the struggle and met a tragic death by murder. During the following seven years, civil war continued almost without interruption. The greatest portion of Kalhana's life passed in what was for Kashmir one long period of civil war and political dissolution.

Kalhana's father, Campaka, held several responsible positions under King Harsa. First of all he was *Dvarpati* or commander of the frontier defences. Later he became his minister and at the time of Harsa's flight, he was one of his few followers who remained loyal to him to the last. From the mention of Parihaspura as the birthplace of his uncle, Kanaka, it may be inferred that this town was the original home of Kalhana's family. A Brahmin by descent, he was a Saiva by faith, but throughout his narrative he maintains a friendly attitude towards Buddhism.

His composition proves amply that his studies in various branches of traditional learning had been both thorough and extensive. His acquaintance with the older standard works of poetry, such as the *Raghuvansha* and *Meghaduta*, may be assumed a priori. He seems to

5. *Rajatarangini*, i — 52 and viii — 3404.

have thoroughly studied the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* also.

The dynastic war which had cost Harsa his throne and life had a lasting effect on the fortunes of Kalhana's family. His father, who in Harsa's reign had occupied one of the highest posts in the administration, played no longer any part in public life after his master's death. It seems that Kalhana himself never held any office under any subsequent ruler or otherwise enjoyed any special favour from the court. Probably we owe his activity as a chronicler to this fact. Born from a family of rank and note he could have expected to take an active share in the affairs of his country like his father before him. The adverse political circumstances closed for him the doors of service. What better use, congenial to his hereditary tastes, could he then make of his literary training than by recording the history of his country?

As a Historian

Kalhana's qualities as a historian are unsurpassed. For the collection of material for his history he not only consulted older works on the subject, but also used original sources like inscriptions of various kinds — those recording the construction of temples, memorials or places; records of land grants or privileges, etc. He also studied coins and inspected old buildings. He is a master of accurate topography of ancient Kashmir.

Kalhana's impartiality as a historian and his honesty of purpose are remarkable. He himself puts forth the ideal in the following words:

"That noble-minded (poet) is worthy of praise whose word, like that of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past."[6]

He does not hide errors and weaknesses of the king under whom he wrote. He does not hesitate to condemn the later activities of King Harsa to whom he had good reason to be grateful for raising his family to high office or to expose with bitter sarcasm the cowardice and empty bragging of the Kashmiri soldiery.

Kalhana lived at a time when the invention of gunpowder and the printing press had not yet revolutionized human thought. He had not heard of the rights of man nor the denunciation of monarchy, but he passes many strictures against kings and priests, their morals and methods. He shows his aversion and contempt for the Damaras whose overbearing attitude was the direct cause of the civil wars which sapped the vitality of the kingdom. Equally critical is he of the doings of the

6. Kalhana, op. cit., i — 7.

Kayastha or clerical class who took every opportunity to fleece the poor. Similarly he does not hide his contempt for the priests whose pride was equal to their ignorance. He bitterly complains of their baneful influence on the affairs of the State.

> History, according to him, was not something to learn but something to make people live and understand life. He gives both sides of all questions and points out the faults as well as the virtues of the kings and other characters whom he describes. Further, his observations show that the achievements of the great are merely answers to certain big needs in society and that success was only possible because the time was ripe. Hence he does not cover up the faults of the State, an individual ruler or group of men. In his history there are no heroes or heroines and the few persons who might be so described are only functionaries of certain groups and have not been too much emphasized; indeed whether we love them or not for their virtues it is their vices which make them unforgettable. Another trait in Kalhana which is modern is his freedom from narrow nationalism. He pays a tribute of admiration to the brave men of Bengal who travelled all the way up to Kashmir and avenged, at the cost of their lives, the death of their king who had been treacherously murdered at Trigrami.[7]

Shortcomings certainly there are in his Chronicle when studied in the light of modern historical technique. He does not, for example, distinguish a legend from history. At places there are serious gaps in chronology. But still it is impossible to peruse the Chronicle and in particular its later portions, without realizing that the poet who wrote it had an observant eye and an open mind for the affairs of the world around him.

Later Chronicles

Kalhana's work was continued by his countryman Jonaraja who brought the Chronicle down to the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin (1420-70 AD). Jonaraja was a scholar of considerable attainments and seems to have been well-acquainted with the old nomenclature of the Valley. The greater portion of his Chronicle deals with the reigns of the late Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Kota. His pupil Srivara took up the thread and in four chapters wrote about the events from 1459 to 1486. Srivara is a slavish imitator of Kalhana. His text looks in a great portion more like a canto from the *Rajatarangini*, than an original composition.

7. R.S. Pandit, *River of Kings*, p. xxvii.

The value of his work, however, lies in giving the details of his contemporary life. His Chronicle shows the slow change in the names of localities from old to modern. For example, there is the name of Mahasarit stream transformed into Mari, an evident adaptation of the modern Mar, and the *tirtha* of Martand regularly referred to by its modern name Bavan.

The Fourth Chronicle entitled *Rajavalipataka*, begun by Prajyabhatta whose composition ended with the year 1513-14, was completed by his pupil Suka some years after the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar (1586). The slow change from the old to modern treatment of place-names and other details are more pronounced in the works of Prajyabhatta and Suka.

Notwithstanding the inferiority of these later Chronicles as literary composition when compared with Kalhana's work, "it seems that the later authors had greatly improved Kalhana's method of writing history. They are clear and perspicuous, and events are narrated consecutively, so that the whole narration runs in one continuous flow. The writers could not however forget that they were poets as well as historians, and consequently they interspersed their accounts with flowers of poesy and rhetorical flourishes."[8] They are of immense value as being the sole and authentic record of the transitional period when Kashmir passed from the rule of Hindu to that of Muslim kings. They throw light on contemporary life of Kashmiris and record the troubles and oppression which lasted with short interruptions for two and a half centuries previous to Akbar's conquest.

> It must be mentioned that valuable as the writings of these authors are from a historical point of view, in the absence of any other history of the country they relate to, we cannot unhesitatingly accept their estimation of persons and events when we remember that they were, what may be called, court pandits, and depended on the smiles of kings, whose accounts they wrote, for almost everything they had in the world.
>
> There is, however, no reason to disbelieve the correctness of their accounts, irrespective of the writers' views, regarding the events narrated.[9]

Though for nearly two centuries after the advent of the Muslim rule Sanskrit continued to be the language for transacting official business, yet with the increasing patronage bestowed on the Persian language and literature by the Muslim rulers, the chronicling of events in

8. Jogesh Chunder Dutt, Preface to *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol.III, p. ii-iii.
9. Ibid. p. ii-iii.

Sanskrit ceased to be in vogue. We have thereafter histories written in Persian by eminent Kashmirian scholars.

The earliest work was the Persian translation of the *Rajatarangini* by Mulla Ahmad who undertook it under orders of king Zain-ul-abidin. Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri, pupil of Muhammad Afzal of Bukhara who had come to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar, was a profound scholar, a distinguished poet and a historian. His translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* named *Bahr-ul-Asmar* or the 'Sea of Tales', was perhaps not completed by him, for in 1594, Akbar asked Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni to rewrite and complete it.

Mulla Ahmad's *Bahr-ul-Asmar* is not traceable nor is its rewritten version by Badayuni which might have given an indication of the scope of this work.[10]

Mulla Ahmad's history, however, forms the basis of the work of another eminent historian — Malik Haider Chaudura. He wrote his history of Kashmir from the earliest times to his own in Persian in 1617, the 12th year of the accession of Jahangir, Malik Haider and his brother, Malik Ali, professed the Shia faith and were noblemen descended from Malik Muhammad Naji, the minister of Husain Shah Chak. In the latter part of his history, Haider Malik says that he spent 24 years of his life with Yusuf Shah Chak whom he followed in his banishment to Bihar. He was personally engaged with Sher Afgan Khan in the attack in which the latter succumbed in 1607. Haider and his brother protected Sher Afgan's widow, Mihr-un-Nisa Begum (afterwards Nur Jahan), against danger and she later warmly recommended him to Jahangir who bestowed upon him the titles of *Chagtai* and *Rais-ul-Mulk*, with an office in the government of Kashmir.

Haider Malik besides being a historian was also an architect. He rebuilt the Jamma Masjid of Srinagar which had been consumed by fire and also the Khanqah of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi.[11]

Narayan Kaul Ajiz, a distinguished scholar of Persian language and

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10. Badayuni(p. 384) says: "The Emperor had ordered me to rewrite the Persian translation of the *History of Kashmir* by Mulla Shah Ahmad of Shahabad, a learned man well versed in argumentative sciences and history. I was to write it in an easy style. This I did, and in the space of two months I presented my book, which was put in His Majesty's Library to await its turn for reading."
11. " On Sunday, the 7th of Urdibihishat, I rode to the village of Chaudura which is the native country of Haider Malik," writes Jahangir. See *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Rogers and Beveridge, Vol.II, p. 154-55.

literature and a poet, followed Haider Malik in writing a history of Kashmir. His *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* written in 1710 gives an assessment of the reigns of the sultans and early Mughals from a liberal's point of view.

The tradition of writing history was continued by Khwaja Muhammad Azam Kaul of Didamar quarter of Srinagar, who flourished in Kashmir under the rule of the later Mughals. His history entitled *Waquat-i-Kashmir* was commenced in 1735 and completed in 1746. Khwaja Ahmad besides being a saintly person was also a poet and is the author of several works. He paseed away in 1765. His son Khwaja Muhammad Aslam, is the author of *Gauhar-i-Alam* a history of Kashmir in which he has made considerable additions to his father's work.

Pandit Birbal Kachru who wrote his history of Kashmir in 1835 when Kashmir was under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was a great scholar of Persian and a poet too. Besides throwing light on the later history of Kashmir under the Mughal and Afghan rulers, his work is of immense value in assessing the economic condition of the various classes of people during this period.

As we come nearer our times, we find a number of histories written in Persian by Kashmirian scholars. The pride of place, however, goes to Maulvi Ghulam Hasan's *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* which in three volumes deals with the geography, political history and the arts and crafts of Kashmir. Maulvi Hasan was born at a village near Bandipur in Kashmir in 1832 and died at the same village in 1898. He came of a family of *Pirs* or Muhammadan priests, distinguished in Persian and Arabic scholarship. Hasan's father, Maulvi Ghulam Rasool was a Persian poet. Hasan took his lessons from him and other teachers and learnt the Unani system of medicine which he practised until the closing years of his life.[12]

The terrible famine of 1877-79 whose ravages assumed appalling proportions, moved Hasan and he wrote a historical account of the incidence of famine, making some constructive suggestions for prevention of such calamities in future. His interest in the history of Kashmir was roused while writing this pamphlet for which he had to consult old records. He was an authority on Kashmir and its past and when Sir W. lawrence was Settlement Commissioner in Kashmir, Hasan supplied him with much historical and 'statistical information.[13] Hasan's deep

12. Pandit Anand Koul, *History of Kashmir,* JASB. Vol. IX No. 5.
13. He also taught him the Kashmiri language. In his *Valley of Kashmir,* Sir Walter expresses his gratefulness in these words: "What else (Kashmiri language) I have larnt I owe to Pir Hasan Shah, a learned Kashmiri, whose work has entirely been among the villagers."

attachment to the study of the history of his land took him to Pindori, a village in the Rawalpindi district where, he had been informed, was a manuscript copy of Mulla Ahmad's translation of an ancient history, *Ratnakar Purana*, which contained an account of 35 kings, whose names, according to Kalhana were 'lost' to history. Hasan secured a copy of Mulla Ahmad's translation and incorporated the account of these 'lost' kings in his history. *Ratnakar Purana* is now untraceable and on this account Mulla Ahmad's translation is of immense importance.

The copy of the Pindori manuscript which Hasan had obtained was also unfortunately lost in a flood. In 1902, the Kashmir Government tried to secure a copy of Mulla Ahmad's history, but Mulla Mahmud, from whom Hasan had obtained his copy, had since died and his family had moved to Afghanistan.

Hasan seems to have taken great pains in writing his history which throughout maintains a high standard of historical sense and impartiality.

With the adoption of Urdu and English as the court languages in the State towards the middle of the last century, we find some valuable contribution to the history of Kashmir made in these languages by Kashmirian scholars. In 1910 Pandit Anand Koul, who held a high post in Kashmir Government and who was one of the first Kashmiris to learn English, contributed two papers to the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the early period of Kashmir history, which were published in the Journal of the Society. Besides his *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir,* he wrote books on the archaeological remains in the State, and on the Kashmiri language, folklore and arts and crafts of the Valley.

Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Sufi, a former Registrar of the Delhi University, began his history of Kashmir entitled *Kashir* in 1925 and completed it in 1949 when it was published by the Punjab university (Pakistan). It is a voluminous record of the achievements of Kashmiris after the advent of Islam into the Valley.

Similarly Muhammad-ud-din Fauq, a Kashmiri settled in Lahore, wrote extensively in Urdu on the geography, history and folklore of the Valley. His history of Kashmir was published in 1910. In 1936 he published an exhaustive survey of the origin and history of various communities and well-known families of Kashmir, which is of considerable interest from anthropological and ethnic points of view.

Indian Notices

The conspicuous absence of useful information on Kashmir in Sanskrit literature outside the Valley may be attributed to the general character of that literature. For there is the same vagueness and insufficiency of local references in the case of territories adjoining the old centres of literary activity, as are found with regard to Kashmir.

However, the name *Kashmira* is found as the designation of the region and its inhabitants, mentioned in Panini's great grammatical work, and in Patanjali's comments thereon. The *Mahabharata* too refers in several passages to Kashmir and its rulers, but in a fashion so general and vague that nothing but the situation of the country in the hill region to the North can be concluded therefrom. Kashmiris are referred to in the *Puranas* along with the tribes inhabiting the northern territories of India.

Varahamihra (circa. 500 AD) in his *Brihitsamhita* includes Kashmir in the northern division of India. Among tribes inhabiting this region and its neighbourhood the Abhisaras, Daradas, Darvas, Khasas and Kiras can be identified.

It is, however, with the rise of the Mughals that Muhammadan historians of India take interest in Kashmir and its people. The earliest historical reference to this part of India is in *Zafar-nama* by Sharaf-ud-din, the historian of Timur, which was completed 1424-25. It throws light on Sikandar's relations with Timur when the latter invaded India. It also gives a brief description of the geography and people of Kashmir. Similarly, in the *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* which is said to have been written by Timur himself, there are references to his relations with Sultan Sikandar and to the topography of the Valley.

A detailed account, however, of Kashmir, its people, agriculture, religion, architecture, arts and crafts is given by Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*. Mirza Dughlat, a cousin of Babar and an adherent of Humayun, twice invaded Kashmir; once from Kashghar in 1533 and again from Lahore in 1540 when he ruled the Valley for ten years in the name of the puppet king, Nazuk Shah. It was during these years of his stay in Kashmir that he wrote his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi,* which though a history of the Mughals of Central Asia gives a detailed account of his invasion of Kashmir and draws a contemporary picture of the land and its people. Begun in 1541-42, it was completed in 1544-45.

The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizam-ud-din contains a section dealing

with the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to the conquest of the Valley by Akbar. Muhammad Qasim Firishta's *Tarikh-i-Firishta* also contains a chapter on Kashmir. His description of the agricultural products, religion and buildings of Kashmir is, however, based on *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and gives no new information.

Useful information about Akbar's relations with Chak rulers of Kashmir is contained in Abdul Qadir Badayuni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*.

Abul Fazal's *Akbar-Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* are a mine of information on Kashmir, its geography, history, antiquities, administration agriculture, arts and industries and the general economic and social condition of the people under the Shahmiri and early Mughal rulers.

In his inimitable style Jahangir in his *Tuzk* gives a description of Kashmir, the land he loved, and throws side-lights on the economic condition of its people under his rule.

Kashmir figures prominently thereafter in the works of writers on the history of India and particularly of the Pubjab. There is, however, very scanty information from Indian sources about the conditions in Kashmir under the Afghans who conquered the Valley in 1752 and whose rule lasted till 1819, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces drew them away and ushered in the Sikh rule.

For a detailed survey of the Sikh regime there is, fortunately, ample material in the accounts of several European travellers who began to visit this frontier State in increasing numbers.

Foreign Notices

From ancient times Kashmir has attracted attention in countries beyond the frontiers of India. The earliest mention of the Valley and its adjacent territories is found in Ptolemy's geography. He places the region of Kaspeiria at 'below the sources of the Bidaspes (Vitasta) and of the Sandabal (Chandrabhaga) and of the Adris (Iravati).[14]

In a notice which Stephanos of Byzantium has preserved from the *Bassarica*, a lost poem of Dionysios of Samos, there is a passage with a mention of Kaspeiroi as a tribe famous among all Indians for their fast feet. It is natural that living deep in the Himalayan valley surrounded by the high mountain walls, Kashmiris should develop marching powers

14. Ptolemy, VII, i — 42.

and gain abroad the reputation of good pedestrians.

Hekataios (circa. 549-486 BC) mentions Kaspapyros as a city of Gandharians. Later Herodotus, the 'Father of history' mentioned the city of Kaspatyros as the place at which the expedition of Scylax of Koryanda, sent by Darius to explore the course of the Indus, embarked. As Kashmir had close cultural and political relations with Gandhara (Kabul valley) in ancient times, it is quite natural that the Kaspapyros of Hekataios and Kaspatyros of Herodotus should refer to Kashmir. These early classical notices are valuable inasmuch as they show the antiquity of the name by which the land has been known in India and abroad from time immemorial.

There are, however, more detailed references to Kashmir in Chinese records. At a period when Chinese knowledge of India was less developed Kashmir was mentioned under the general term of Ki-pin which though designating properly the Upper-Kabul valley was vaguely applied to the northern territories of India.

The first clear reference to Kashmir is contained in a record dating from 541 AD. The notice is based on the account of an Indian envoy who reached China during the early part of the reign of the T'ang dynasty.[15]

It describes Kashmir as belonging to the northern part of India and 'enveloped on all sides like a precious jewel by the snowy mountains, with a valley in the south which leads up to it and serves as the gate of the kingdom.'

There is a full and detailed account of Kashmir recorded by the great Chinese pilgrim Heun Tsiang who reached the Valley from Urusha (Hazara) in the west in 631 AD and stayed on for two years to study Sanskrit and Buddhist lore. Not only does he accurately describe the routes by which he entered and left the Valley, but he mentions the names of several viharas and stupas whose identity has been now established with several ancient sites in Kashmir. His account of the climate and soil of the Valley is as accurate as the description of the people who inhabited it. The tolerant nature of the king and his subjects, the geographical limits of his jurisdiction and the current traditions about the origin of the Valley recorded by him, throw a flood of light on the early history of the land.

Heun Tsiang's narrative tells that he left the Valley in 633 AD by way of the Tosamaidan route and reached Pun-nu-tso the Parnotsa of Kalhana or modern Poonch. Both Poonch and Rajapuri (modern Rajauri) were subject to Kashmir.

15. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol.II, p. 354.

The next Chinese notice of considerable historical interest is contained in the annals of the T'ang dynasty. They mention the arrival at the imperial court of the first embassy from Kashmir, sent by king Tchen-t'o-lo-pi-li (in or shortly after 713 AD), and that of another embassy sent by his brother and successor Mu-to-pi. These names clearly refer to Chandrapida and Muktapida (Lalitaditya) of the *Rajatarungini*.

The description of Kashmir which follows these entries in the Chinese annals, corresponds to the accounts as recorded by Heun Tsiang. In addition, however, there is a reference to the lake Mo-ho-to-mo-loung or Mahapadma, the old name of the Wular. There is also an exact statement about the capital city which is named Po-lo-ou-lo-po-lo, a correct reproduction of Pravarapura, the name by which modern Srinagar was known then.

Another account of Kashmir and its people is furnished by Ou-Kong, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Kashmir in 759 AD. He also came from Urusha by the Jhelum valley route and stayed in the Valley for four years. His description of the people though not as accurate as that of Heun Tsiang, is valuable inasmuch as it corroborates some statements made by Kalhana with regard to the foundation of temples and viharas. He mentions the three routes leading to the Valley and speaks of more than 300 Buddhist convents there.

With the decline of the power of the T'ang dynasty, the political relations between China and the northern kingdoms of India ceased. The pilgrimage of Chinese Buddhists continued during the next two centuries but no detailed account bearing on Kashmir has been given by them in their travel diaries.

The early Muhammadan writers are the next foreign informants regarding the history and geography of Kashmir. The seclusion of the Valley and the policy of exclusiveness adopted by its rulers from the end of ninth century AD are probably responsible for scanty references to this kingdom by the Arab writers. It was only in the early part of the 11th century that there is a remarkably accurate account of its geography and political set-up in Arabic from the pen of Alberuni.

The great Muhammadan scholar visited northern India in the train of Mahmud Ghazni and his interest in Kashmir was roused by the reports that following his master's victories, "the Hindus had fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach; to Kashmir, Banaras and other places."[16] In another passage he mentions Banaras and Kashmir as the

16 .*India*, translated by Sachau, p. 206 sqq.

high schools of the Hindu sciences.

Mahmud could not conquer Kashmir and this prevented Alberuni from visiting the Valley personally. He seems, however, to have secured the services of some Kashmirian scholars to teach him Sanskrit. Alberuni's main account of Kashmir is contained in Chapter XVIII of his book, *India*. Compared with the description of the rest of Inida, it is disproportionately detailed. He mentions the routes, the mountains, rivers, lakes and the fortresses. He also gives an account of the composition of its population, their dress, agriculture, arts and crafts.

The first Europeans to visit Kashmir were Father Gerome Xavier, a Navarese of high birth, and Benoist de Gois who appeared at the court of Akbar and accompanied the Emperor to Kashmir. Short sketches of Kashmir and its people have been recorded by Father Xavier, which were published in Antwerp in 1605. It appears that the Valley was then in the grip of a severe famine. The harrowing plight of the victims as witnessed by Father Xavier were recorded by the Potuguese priest Pierre du Jarric in his interesting account of Akbar and his court.

There is, however, a more detailed and accurate account of Kashmir under the Mughals from the pen of the French physician, Francis Bernier, who accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir in 1665. In his famous *Letters* he gives interesting details of the route the royal cavalcade followed from Delhi to Kashmir. His portrayal of the habits and life of Kashmiris appears as real now as it was then. Bernier's observations are helpful in forming a picture of the economic and social life of Kashmir during the rule of the Imperial Mughals.

The next European traveller of note to write on Kashmir was the Jesuit priest, the Italian Hippolyte, Desideri who hailed from Pistoia near Florence. In November 1714 he reached Srinagar and was struck by the beauty of the landscape around him. He has left an account of the various handicraft products, notably shawls, of Kashmir. His recorded experiences during the winter of 1715 which he had to pass in Srinagar before he left for Ladakh next year, are both graphic and interesting.

We are indebted to George Forster, an officer of the Bengal Army, for his detailed eye-witness account of conditions prevailing in Kashmir during the chaotic rule of the Afghans. While on his way to St. Petersburgh in Russia by the land route, he entered Kashmir in 1783. He had to spend some time in the Valley and received a harsh treatment at the hands of the Afghan ruler of the time. His account, though brief, of the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir then, is

of considerable value, being the sole testimony of an independent foreign traveller of the miserable state of the country and people during those days.

Afghans were followed by the Sikhs who ruled for a brief period of 27 years — 1819-46. Valuable accounts of their rule and the condition of the people under them have been left by several European travellers to the Valley, particularly Vigne (1835) who, besides the general description of the Valley, gives details of the devastating earthquake of 1828, the memory of which was still fresh in the minds of the people. Vigne also narrates interesting folklore, and the odd superstitions. Moorcraft, another traveller, besides giving a general description of Kashmir and Ladakh, narrates the political and economic set-up prevailing in Kashmir then. He gives an interesting account of the shawl trade which had reached its peak. Interesting and illuminating travel diaries have also been left by Baron Hugel and Baron von Schonberg who visited the Valley during this time.

In 1846, the Valley came under the Dogra rulers of Jammu and the suzerainty of the British India Government. It is from this time onwards that a close and scientific survey was conducted of the State's geography, physical features, history, antiquities, and ethnology and composition of its people. Outstanding contributions on these subjects were made by Drew, Lawrence and Cunningham — whose works form the bedrock of the study of Kashmir and its people.

Fredric Drew's *The Jammoo and Kashmir Territories,* published in 1875, deals with the detailed geography and physical features of the State, particularly of the Jammu region. Sir Walter Lawrence whose land settlement in the State marks a turning point in the economic and social history of its people, has given in his *Valley of Kashmir* (published 1895), an authentic and illuminating record of the physical features of the Valley, its flora and fauna, and folklore, language, history, social customs and occupation of the people.

Alexander Cunningham's *Ladak* is a mine of information on the 'land of the Lamas.' It is an exhaustive survey of its geography, the ethnology of its people, their religion, social customs, history and economic set-up.

Archaeological Evidence

We owe it to the secluded nature of the State and particularly of the

Valley which is surrounded by high mountain ramparts, that abundant archaeological material is available to corroborate and at places to supplement the old chronicles and texts. "The Valley of Kashmir", says Lawrence, "is the 'holy land' of the Hindus and I have rarely been in any village which cannot show some relic of antiquity. Curious stone miniatures of the old Kashmir temples, huge stone seats of Mahadeo *(Badrapith)*, phallic emblems innumerable, carved images heaped in grotesque confusion by some clear spring, have met me at every turn."

"I have seen curious mosques built in a style unlike the present, of wooden beams with stones between. Chance excavations, for irrigation and other works, reveal curious sculptures and interesting relics of ancient history."[17]

No wonder that travellers to Kashmir were struck by the huge edifices of ancient date which dotted the Valley. As early as the seventh century AD., Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong mentioned a number of temples and viharas. Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and Abul Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari* noticed several old temples and mosques. But a systematic survey and study of the ancient ruins and coins of the State fell to the lot of European archaeologists and research scholars who came to the State from the middle of the 19th century.

The first in this line was General (then Captain) Alexander Cunningham whom political duty had taken to the Valley in 1846 after the First Sikh War and the establishment of the Dogra rule over Kashmir. Though his stay was short and primarily devoted to a survey of the conspicuous temple ruins still extant, he succeeded in identifying correctly a number of important ancient sites such as Puranadisthana, the 'old capital', Jyestesvara, Martanda, Padmapura, Pattana, Khonamusa, etc.

His survey of the old Hindu temple ruins threw light on the history of buildings mentioned in the Chronicles of Kalhana and later Sanskrit historians. He discussed at length the development of their architectural style with its Greek and Roman influences.[18] Subsequently he dealt this subject at length in the chapter on the 'Kingdom of Kashmir' in his *Ancient Geography of India.*

Cunningham's researches roused a good deal of interest in the ancient remains in the Valley and in 1865 Bishop W.G. Cowie, Chaplain

17. *Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 161-62.
18. "Essay on the Arian Order of Architecture as depicted in the temples of Kashmir", JASB, 1848, pp. 243-327.

on duty in Kashmir, studied more temple ruins, especially those not described by Cunningham.[19]

A few years later in 1869 Major Henry Hardy Cole, Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, took photographs and prepared illustrations of most of the ancient temple ruins and published them in 1870. Some of these ruins are now no more but they are preserved in Cole's sketches and photographs.

The fruitful results of these early archaeological studies induced some enthusiastic amateurs who visited Kashmir as tourists or lent officers to conduct minor excavations at a few sites. In 1865, for instance, excavations at Avantipura were undertaken by the Kashmir government at the suggestion of Bishiop Cotton and a few sculptures were unearthed.[20] In 1882, Mr Garrick, formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India, carried out extensive excavations at Ushkur (ancient Huvishkapura) near Baramula, where he excavated a tope or stupa of squared stones, held together with iron clamps.[21] Similarly in 1891, a little digging done by Lawrence at Narasthan brought to light interesting specimens of old sculpture.

But it was George Buhler's memorable tour of Kashmir in 1875 that resulted in the discovery of valuable material for a systematic study of the history of Kashmir. Although primarily engaged in collection and examination of old Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts, he gave graphic and accurate notices of some old sites in the Valley which he had visited himself. He realised the importance of a reconstruction of the historical topography for a thorough and critical study of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, and indicated in his *Report* the manner in which a systematic study of these should be taken up.

Dr Stein followed his method and thanks to his sustained labours we have a comprehensive knowledge of the antiquities of the Valley. The result of his archaeological survey in the summers of 1888-90 is contained in his famous *Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kashmir*. A reference to his notes like those on the castle of Lohara, on the rediscovery of the long forgotten *tirtha* of Bheda, on the old confluence of the Vitasta and Sindu etc, will help to realise the interest he took in this kind of search and also time and trouble it frequently cost him. By his devoted work Stein has shown the close and important link that most of these ruins

19. JASB, 1866, Part I.
20. Duke, *Handbook*, p. 304.
21. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 162.

form in the chain of data for a study of the history of this ancient land and its people.

An exhaustive survey of the Muhammadan buildings and mosques of medieval Kashmir was made by W.H. Nicholls who, in his interesting paper, drew attention to the distinct wooden architecture introduced into Kashmir after the advent of Muslim rule in the 13th century.[22]

With the establishment of the Department of Archaeology by the State Government towards the beginning of the present century, a programme of preserving ancient sites and ruins was taken in hand and a museum was set up in Srinagar. Some excavations were undertaken notably at Avantipura, Ushkur and Martand.[23] Exquisite specimens of terra-cotta figures of the Gandhara art were discovered at Ushkur and sculptures of a mixed Gandhara and Gupta schools of art at Avantipura and Verinag. Huge earthen jars to store grain were also discovered at Avantipura.

The most remarkable discovery was, however, made at Harwan near the famous Shalimar garden, 25 kilometres to the east of Srinagar, where under the guidance of R.C. Kak, Superintendent of the Department, extensive excavations were undertaken in 1925. Foundations of old temples datable to the 3rd-4th centuries AD were unearthed, as also a large courtyard of terracotta tiles bearing figures with representation of Central Asian features and dress.[24] In 1942, the Department also undertook excavations at Tapar, 35.5 kilometres from Srinagar and 6 kilometres from Pattan. The ruins of the base of a temple came to light and inscriptions in fragments found there helped to fix the date of its erection in the reign of Parmanudeva (12th century AD).[25]

One of the most interesting excavations which reveal data on prehistoric period of Kashmir were recently conducted at the ancient menhir site of Burzahom, 16 kilometres to the east of Srinagar.

It was in 1935 that De Terra, leader of the Yale-Cambridge Expedition excavated a trial trench at the base of one of the megaliths at Burzahom. He was rewarded by finds of early pointed-butt stone axes, highly black polished ware, polished cells of traps, hoes, pestle,and bone

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22. Ann. Rep. ASI, 1906-7
23. D.R. Sahni, *Excavations at Avantipura,* Ann. Report. ASI, II. 1913-14, pp. 40-62.
24. R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir,* p. 109.
25. G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir,* p. 51.

implements. At the bottom, a neolithic hearth was also noticed.[26] The cultural pattern of Burzahem is, Gordon points out, similar to that of Maski and Brahmigiri and shows a stone axe culture starting perhaps as early as 1200 BC.[27]

The digging was abandoned before reaching the natural *karewa* silt, and Burzahom continued to remain an enigma.

When in 1960 the Archaeological Survey of India which a year earlier had taken over the State Department of Archaeology, undertook systematic excavations at this ancient site, there were no misgivings as to valuable data on pre-historic culture coming to light there. Sectional diggings have revealed the existence of pit dwellings, datable (tentatively) to 3000 BC. Besides, a large number of stone implements, some highly polished ware, bone implements like awls, eyed needles, and spatulas have been found.

If archaeological discoveries have thrown valuable light on the history of Kashmir, no less fruitful results have followed the close and systematic study of its old coins — gold, silver, copper and brass — found in and outside the State. Right from the time of Kaniska there is numismatic evidence of a chain of kings up to modern times.

General Cunningham was the first to take up this study. He collected during his stay in the Valley, a large number of ancient coins and as a result of a close study of these and other finds, he was able to elucidate a series of important questions bearing on the chronological system of the *Rajatarangini* and on the numismatic history of Kashmir. In a paper published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1846 he communicated the results of his search for ancient Kashmirian coins and proved by their analysis the great value of numismatic evidence for the critical control of Kalhana's and other records.[28]

Some more scholarly studies of Kashmir coins have resulted in useful data being collected on the chronology of the Sultans and other Muslim kings of the 14th to 19th centuries. Among such studies is that of

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26. H.De. Terra, 'Excavations at Burzahom', *Miscellanea of the American Philosophical Soc.* (1936).
27. *Ancient India*, ASI, No.9, p. 73.
28. "The Ancient Coinage of Kashmir, with Chronological and Historical Notes," *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Numismatic Society*, 1846 No. XX, pp. 1 Sqq.

C.J. Rogers.[29] Sir Aurel Stein[30] and R.B. Whitehead[31] also made considerable contributions to the knowledge of ancient history by a study of old Kashmir coins.

Of considerable interest are the finds of hoards of Sri Pratapa type of coins of the eighth century AD from as distant places as Bhitware, District Faizabad, from Rajghat and Sarnath, in the confines of Banaras, from Monghyr District and from the ancient university site of Nalanda, Patna District. The place-finds confirm the statement of Kalhana about Lalitaditya's campaigns and chronology.[32]

Light from another independent source has been thrown on the ancient history of the Valley and its political and cultural relations with kingdoms of Central Asia, Tibet and Gandhara, In 1890, Col. Bower discovered a birch-bark manuscript at Kucha. In 1904, the German expeditions under Dr Von Le Coq and later under Dr Grundwedel made valuable discoveries of Buddhist art and Sanskrit manuscripts on birch-bark from the old Tokhara country of Kucha, Karashahr and Turfan. The French Sinologist M.Pelliot visited Turkistan in 1906-8 and discovered Sanskrit manuscripts written in the Tang period. He also discovered Buddhist Mural paintings of the seventh to tenth centuries at Tun-huang. The old manuscripts were written in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and the Kushan dialects on birch-bark which was, no doubt, exported to Central Asia from Kashmir.[33]

Sir Aurel Stein's archaeological explorations in Chinese Turkistan in 1901, 1906-8 and 1913-16, yielded rich material showing the important part Kashmir played as an advance post of Indian culture. The mass of Stein's collections of domestic objects, antiquities of terracotta, stucco and other material which has been arranged in the Central Asian Section of the National Museum in New Delhi, exhibit the deep influence of Buddhist religion and art carried to those regions mostly by Kashmirian missionaries.[34]

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29. *The Copper Coins of the Sultans of Kashmir*, JASB, 1879, XI-viii, 277-85. *The Square Silver Coins of the Sultans of Kashmir*, JASB, 1885, pp. 92-139.
30. Stein, 'Notes on Monetary System of Ancient Kashmir', *Numismatic Chronicle*, XIX, pp. 125-74.
31. R.B. Whitehead, 'The Gold Coins of Kashmir', *Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* (London), 5th Series; Vol. 13, pp. 257-67.
32. JRAS, 1906, p. 843; JASB, N.S. 1928, p. 6-9; JNSI, X, Part I, p. 30-32; Ann. Rep. ASI, (Eastern Circle) 1919-20, p. 48.
33. R.S. Pandit, *The River of Kings*, pp. 605-6.
34. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, 1907; *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 1912; *Serindia*, 1921; *Innermost Asia*, 1928.

Similarly excavations of Sir John Marshal at Taxila unearthed enough proof to establish the close cultural and economic ties between Kashmir and Gandhara in ancient times when, as Heun Tsiang records, Taxila was a part of the kingdom of Kashmir.

Rev. A.H. Francke's archaeological explorations in 1909 in Lahoul, Ladakh, Zanskar and Purig brought to light a number of Buddhist shrines, monasteries with wood carvings and other antiquities, which established the relations — political, religious and cultural — that the people of Kashmir had with those of this region.[35] J.Ph. Vogel's search after inscriptions and antiquities of Chamba, while throwing light on the history of that neighbouring principality, showed its close relations with Kashmir.[36] The Lakshana Devi temple at Brahmor in Chamba was, it is established, repaired under Lalitaditya in Kashmir style.[37]

Perhaps the most important source of Kashmir history is the people who inhabit this beautiful land. Their traditions, customs and manners, folklore, language, dress, food and other habits, to which they have tenaciously held from ancient times, present an open book of history. For, we cannot overlook the fact that Kashmir's is the history of a living people with their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears which makes its study all the more interesting and instructive.

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35. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, 1914-26.
36. *Inscriptions of Chamba State*, 1902-3; *Antiquities of Chamba State*, 1911.
37. Goetz, 'Art of Lalitaditya', *Art and Letters*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1.

3

PREHISTORIC AND EARLY PERIOD

A remarkable feature of the origin of the land and people of Kashmir is the legends in which they are woven. But what is more remarkable is that the conclusions drawn from them stand modern scientific tests converting the legends into geological facts. One wonders if such a phenomenon is portrayed in any other part of the world.

The Legend

The legends about the origin of the Valley are unanimous in referring to its having been a vast inland lake formed of the waters from the melting ice and snow on the high mountain peaks surrounding it. The gorge through which the river Vitasta at present escapes near Baramula was then blocked up, and the whole valley filled with what must have been the most lovely lake in the world.

According to the *Nilamatpurana* which is the oldest record of the legend, the lake was called Satisaras, the lake of Sati. In the period of the seventh Manu the demon Jalodhbhava ('water-borne'), who resided in the lake, caused great distress to all neighbouring regions by his devastations. The sage Kashyapa, the father of all Nagas, while on his pilgrimage in the north of India heard of the cause of this distress from his son Nila, the king of the Kashmir Nagas. The sage, determined to punish the evil-doer, proceeded to Brahma to implore his and other gods' help for this purpose. His prayer was granted. All the gods by Brahma's command started for Satisaras and took up their positions on the lofty peaks above Kaunsarnag. The demon who was invincible in his own element, refused to come forth from the lake. Vishnu, thereupon, called on his brother, Balabhadra, to drain the lake which he did by piercing the mountain with his ploughshare. When the lake had dried up, Jalodhbhava was attacked by Vishnu and after a fierce combat was slain with His war-disc.

Kashyapa then settled the land which had thus been produced. The gods took up their abode in it, while the various goddesses adorned the land in the shape of rivers. At first the Naga tribe dwelt in it alone for six months of summer and for the other six months they lived with the Pisacas who withdrew with the coming of summer.[1]

Another version of the legend in Buddhistic form is alluded to by Heun Tsiang.[2] Its main features as related in the *Nilamatpurana* live to this day in popular tradition. They are also reproduced in all Muhammadan abstracts of the *Rajatarangini*.[3] From Malik Haider's *Twarikh*, the legend became known to Bernier and has since found its way into almost every account of Kashmir.[4]

Geological Evidence

Drew recognised clearly the true relation between the legend and those physical facts which seem to support the belief that Kashmir was in comparatively late geological times wholly or in great part occupied by a vast lake. "The traditions", he says, "of the natives — traditions that can be historically traced as having existed for ages — tend in the direction of the Vale having been occupied by a lake, and these have usually been considered to corroborate the conclusions drawn from the observed phenomena. Agreeing as I do with the conclusion, I cannot count the traditions as perceptibly strengthening it; I have little doubt that they themselves originated in the same physical evidence that later travellers have examined."[5]

The geological observations upon which modern scientific inquiries have based their belief as to the former existence of a great lake, are the undoubted lacustrine deposits found in the *karewas* or plateaus in the Valley. These deposits though of no remote date, speaking by geological standard, are far older than any monuments of man that have yet been discovered.

1. A detailed extract of the *Nilamatpurana* story has been given by Buhler in *Report* p.39.
2. See *Si-u-ki*, trans. Beal, p. 149.
3. Compare, e.g. *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii -- 380; Wilson's *Essay*, p. 93
4. See Bernier, *Travels*, ed. Constable, p. 393.
5. *Jummoo*, p. 207.

Prehistoric

Whether man ever saw the lovely Satisaras, is not yet possible to say. Prehistoric explorations in the Valley have revealed the occurrence of the Quaternary Glacial Cycles. The lacustrine deposits called *karewas* are geological formations of the Ice Age. These overlay the terminal moraines of the first glaciation and are comprised of two groups, lower and upper, differentiated by the moraines of the second glaciation. No paleolithic tool has, however, been found in the Valley so far, and human occupation in Pleistocene Kashmir is still to be proved.[6]

The mesolithic or the proto-neolithic period appears to be indicated by the findings of De Terra and Paterson in the Jhelum valley of Kashmir "of great numbers of artificially flaked stones among which were flaked cores reminiscent of palaeolithic technique." But in all these places it was certain that the flakes were associated with pottery-bearing layers of either neolithic or historic date.[7]

Burzahom

The neolithic culture is indicated by the discovery of ground and polished stone axes, hoes and pestles and bone implements, at the well-known menhir site of Burzahom 16 kilometres east of Srinagar. Burzahom is famous as one of the two megalithic sites in the extreme north-west of the Indian sub-continent. It has thrown considerable light on the pre- and proto-historic period in Kashmir. The Archaeological Survey of India who began excavations here in 1960, discovered pits in section near about the silt-bed, indicating a settlement of early pit-dwellers. This is perhaps the only known find of such settlement in India and indications are that more valuable data will be found when extensive surface diggings are taken up.

Who were these people living in pits and using polished stone and bone tools? These are questions to which nobody has as yet hazarded a guess. Much more work is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn as regards the date and historical significance of these neo-lithic and chalcolithic people; even so it will be of value to state the problems and indicate the general direction to which the evidence points.

Central Asian Evidence

Large-scale investigations of archaeological sites in Central Asia

6. Sunil Chandra Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p.190
7. De Terra and Paterson, *Studies on the Ice Age in India*, pp. 230 and 310-11

and Northern India reveal a certain typographical affinity between their cultures going as far back as the Old Stone Age. The movement of ideas and people over Central Asia to Northern India and back can now be traced to Old Stone Age, and does not begin only from the second century BC. Further, this was a continuous process seen through the major pre-and proto-historic periods.

The Soan culture of Northern India has established that the original habitat of the Old Stone Age man in India was in the Himalayan foothills — the Siwalik formations traversed by the Indus system from the Peshawar valley in Pakistan to the Kangra valley in India.

Similarly excavations in Central Asia have revealed that the original habitat of the Old Stone Age man in that region was in the low ranges of the Pamirs, the Gissar, Babatag, and Zarafshan, traversed by the Amu and Syr rivers and their tributaries from southern Kazakhstan to Tadjikistan.[8]

Geographically, the two areas are contiguous, a factor that must have facilitated physical and cultural contacts of people in these regions.

Recent researches in both the areas have, in fact, thrown some welcome light in this direction. We are now in a position to visualise not only a parallel and similar development of the Old Stone Age cultures in India and Central Asia but also their occasional contacts. What the nature of such contacts was can only emerge in coming years when more work is done. At present our analysis is based upon tool typology alone.

Neolithic Culture

With further human cultural development a closer affinity is found between the men living in the two regions during the Neotithic and Chalcolithic periods. There is clear evidence to this effect available from the excavations in Northern India and Central Asia.

The Neolithic period marks the appearance of a momentous change. During the period we find the emergence of effective village farming communities. There are distinct traits of food production, stock raising, grinding of tools and manufacture of pottery.

8. H. De Terra, "Excavations at Burzuhom", *Miscellanea of the American Philosophical Society*, 1936.

Later during the Chalcolithic period, we find man engaged in trade following his acquisition of knowledge of metallurgy which entailed securing of raw materials, sale or barter of finished products and surplus food. The self-sufficiency and isolation of the Neolithic villages was thus broken and conditions were ripe for the movement of both ideas and people.

Fortunately some remarkable Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites have been excavated at several places in India. These have been designated as Southern, Eastern and Northern Neolithic cultures. Of the three it is the Northern Neolithic culture exemplified by the sequence at Burzahom which has a distinctive assemblage. This singles it out from the other two Neolithic cultures in India.

After a close study of the objects unearthed at Burzahom, two phases of occupation have been recognised. In Phase I, the beginning of which is dated to about 2300 BC, the material culture included: (i) coarse grey or black burnished pottery, often with mat impressed bases; (ii) bone tools including awls, needles and harpoons; (iii) packed and ground stone axes; and (iv) ring tools. The inhabitants lived in pits dug into the *karewa* soil.

In Phase II, which seems to have continued till about 1400 BC, the pit dwellings gave place to structures built on ground.

Other innovations included the introduction of the potter's wheel. Towards the end of the phase came the knowledge of metallurgy — a single arrowhead of copper and pierced rectangular or semi-lunar knives known as harvesters. To this phase also belong human and animal burials. The absence of stone blade industry throughout the two phases of occupation is significant.[9]

Central Asia

Neolithic culture sites have been found in Central Asia. Lou-lan, a site located on the international trade route in the Tarim basin of Chinese Central Asia and a few other sites in the Lop Nor desert have yielded these cultures.

The characteristic traits of the assemblage include the presence of: (i) blades, including fluted cores; (ii) ground stone axes, including perforated ones and adzes, chisels, etc; and (iii) handmade pottery of two varieties, black and grey.

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9. S.P. Gupta, *India and Central Asia in the Old Stone Age*, p. 15

The Neolithic cultures of Tadjikistan consist of three main cultural complexes, namely, (i) the Djeitum culture, (ii) the Keltminar culture, and (iii) the Gissar culture.

Most of the traits of the Burzahom sequence, namely, lunar knives, pit dwellings, perforated celts, are paralleled on sites in Central and Northern China.

It would be seen that the similarity between the assemblages of Northern Neolithic culture of India, exemplified by Burzahom sequence and the Neolithic culture in Central and North China as in Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan would have resulted from the movement of people and culture into the sub-continent from the north, most probably through the passes connecting these areas.[10] In studying the spread of Neolithic culture, the geographical and ecological background and the various stimuli, for example, population pressure, search for new land, etc, have to be taken into consideration.

The Pisacas

Hence the origin of the Pisaca legend as given in the *Nilamatpurana* and referred to by Kalhana may be attributed to the stimuli mentioned above. The legend relates to an early periodic movement of tribal people from Central Asia to the Kashmir Valley.[11] It refers to the occupation of the Valley after the desiccation of the lake Satisaras by the Nagas. It is difficult to identify the Nagas, "as they are still behind the veil of myth and legend, peeping out at one time as reptile snakes, and at another as human beings." It is no surprise that different theories have been put forth by different scholars on their identification.

However, the view is now veering round to their being a tribe, may be pre-Aryan who inhabited the mountain tracts of north-west India, particularly Kashmir. They were probably called Nagas after the

10. Ibid, p.81.
11. The following interesting statement about the inhabitants of Rupsu would apply to these early nomad settlers in the Valley: "Further east (of Padar) across the glaciers lies the inaccessible country of Zanskar where the people and cattle live indoors for six months out of the year, where trees are scarce and food is scarcer. Farther east is Rupsu, the lowest point of which is 13,500 feet. In Rupsu live the nomad Champas, who are able to work in an air of extraordinary rarity and complain bitterly of the heat of Leh (11,500 feet)!" *Imperial Gazeteer*, Vol. XV, p. 73.

serpent deities they worshipped, just like the worshippers of Visnu, Siva and Sakti are even now called Vaisnavas, Saivas and Saktas.[12]

The most plausible suggestion is that the Nagas were the aboriginals inhabiting Kashmir before the advent of Vedic Aryans. The latter fought with them and the Pisacas and pushed them to the south, east and west.

But ultimately the Pisacas from Central Asia began to swoop down into the Valley, particularly during the cold season when the Valley was comparatively warm. Described as short-statured and ugly men from the north, they used to return to their homeland with the approach of summer. It can be surmised that the Pisacas were the Chalcolithic tribes from Sinkiang who moved towards Kashmir in search of better land and climate. The location of a neolithic site on the trade route to India from Sinkiang coincides with the annual wars fought against them by what we may call the "Kashmiri Pisacas" who separated from their homeland earlier would not tolerate fresh incursions from that quarter.

The *Nilamatpurana* mentions that the relations between the Nagas and Pisacas improved with the passing of time. But when there began an influx of Aryans from the Punjab, the situation changed. For the Nagas preferred the Aryans to the Pisacas and with their help they ultimately succeeded in throwing them back to their mountain habitats. A similar fate awaited the Nagas who were slowly either driven out or assimilated by the Vedic Aryans.

We are now left with the identification of the *Manavas* or men of the *Nilamatpurana* who entered and settled in the Valley, and ultimately dominated over the aborigines, the Nagas and the Pisacas.

Dr Grierson had advanced an erroneous theory that they were the Aryans who formed a part of the stream of Indo-Aryans but did not share the migration to India *via* the Kabul-river valley to settle in the Punjab. They broke away from the mainstream while crossing the Hindukush and entering the Valley *via* Dardistan and settled there in.[13]

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12. According to James Fergusson, the Nagas were not originally serpents, but serpent worshippers. Dr C.F. Oldham is of the opinion that the Nagas claimed descent from the sun and had the hooded serpent for a totem. K.R. Subramaniam in his *Origin of Shaivism* Mentions that the Naga is mixed with the cult of Saivism, and it is claimed that South Indian Saivism migrated to Northern India, leaving in the south its remnants in the Nagaras, or Nayars. Further, the tribes of Nagas had powerful Kingdoms in different parts of India.
13. *Linguistic Survey of India.* Vol. II — Part 2.

As a result of extensive study and research by the author on this important subject he is convinced that Grierson had erred and the Aryans actually came from the plains of the Punjab.

The Sarswats

Briefly speaking, the earliest stream of Aryans who entered India, found the banks of the river Saraswati in the Punjab fertile and conducive to easy cultivation, and settled there. Described in the Rig-Veda as "the mother of rivers", scholars have debated for centuries whether Saraswati is a myth or has been a reality at some distant point of time.

Fortunately a team of archaeologists, geologists, geographers and historians led by the famous archaeologist Dr V.S. Wakankar, began their quest of the river in 1985. Armed with high-tech facilities like land sat and multi-spectoral scanner (MSS), the team began the quest from the believed source of the river at Adi Badri in the Siwalik Hills in Ambala. They sieved through the whole area notably 150 prominent sites along the route in the Thar desert ending at Somnath in Gujarat.

At the end of it all they had solid evidence to prove the existence of a highly developed culture on the banks of a mighty river which they say was Saraswati.

Apart from this evidence, the existence of a mighty river, matching the Vedic description of Saraswati, has been scientifically proved. The multi-spectoral scanner, a widely used and relied-upon equipment in archaeology, indicates various channels of the river in the region.

According to MSS observations of various channels, Sutluj was the main tributary of Ghaggar (the present name for Saraswati, now in Pakistan). But tectonic movements forced Sutluj to flow in a different direction (at right angle to its original channel), thus leaving Ghaggar dry.[14]

A study of the land sat imagery of Ghaggar (Saraswati) reveals that the river had a constant width of six to eight kilometres from Shatrana in the Punjab to Marot in Pakistan.

The waters of the river spread prosperity all around and the settlers passed centuries there in peace, building well-planned towns and cities to live in. The Aryan society was by and by stratified into classes according to the kind of their work and profession or varna. But as ill-

14. The *Hindustan Times*. Late City Edition, Oct. 11, 1989, p. 3.

luck would have it, the life-giving river changed its course several times and ultimately dried up. Known as Sarswat Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisas, they left the Punjab in search of equally good if not better land in the rest of the sub-continent. An enterprising batch went back to the mountains in the north to reside in the Kashmir Valley, of whose beauty and salubrious climate they had heard from their forefathers who used to go there during summer but were driven out by the indigenous inhabitants-the Nagas and Pisacas. They sought the protection of Nila, the Lord of the Nagas and begged his permission to settle in the Valley permanently as his subjects.

Nila listened to their tale of woe sympathetically, but promised the requested permission on condition that they conformed to the social usages and customs of the Nagas. The Sarswats agreed to these conditions when the Naga chief permitted them to reside permanently in the Valley.

Later Immigrants

The first noteworthy mass immigration took place when Emperor Asoka brought 5,000 Buddhist monks and settled them in Kashmir to popularise the Hinayana Buddhism in Kashmir and adjacent territories. He built several *maths* and viharas and gifted the Valley to the Sangha, as he thought Kashmir was an ideal place for pursuing higher studies and spiritual practices.[15]

Asoka's introduction of Buddhism naturally changed the entire social fabric in Kashmir. The caste-system that the Sarswats had brought with them was slowly discarded by the common people. The scholars and pandits pursued Buddhistic studies and were responsible for giving to the religion a new interpretation altogether — Mahayana. It was later carried to distant lands — Central Asia, Tibet, China, Japan and other regions. In return, students and savants from those lands came in large numbers to study in Kashmir and most of them settled in the Valley.

Several races entered into Kashmir later. There is historical evidence to the settlement of immigrants from Persia, Greece, and Turkistan, the latter coming before and during Kaniska's rule. Tibetans also seem to have come in considerable numbers.

Kashmir behind its mountain ramparts, cut off from its neighbours,

15. Bamzai, *History*, p. 68.

enjoyed immunity from foreign aggression, and hence people from other regions swarmed here to seek protection from invaders. Alberuni says: "The victory of the Punjab by Muhammad Ghazni made people fly away to places where our hands cannot yet reach — to Kashmir, Banaras and other places."[16]

With the advent of Islam there was an influx of a large number of Sufis and Sayyids. More than 700 of his followers were settled in Kashmir by Shah Hamadan in the 14th century, to be followed by a larger influx of Sayyids from Central Asia and Persia during and after Timur's invasion of northern India.[17] Coming as they did from the line of the Prophet, they were treated with great respect by the Muslim kings and their subjects. But their control of the administrative machinery resulted in their oppression of the people who mustering strong under the banner of Malik Tazi Bhat inflicted severe defeats to them and finally drove them out of the Valley. However, many Sayyids preferred to stay behind to live as peaceful citizens.

Excepting the Kashmiri Pandits who in the face of heavy odds, maintained their distinct identity, the purity of race, which has often been noted as distinguishing the great mass of the population of Kashmir, may be admitted with a qualification. It is probably due not only to the isolated nature of the Valley, but also to the curious faculty of absorbing foreign elements. Colonies of Mughals, Pathans, Punjabis, and Paharis settled within comparatively recent times in the Valley have been amalgamated with remarkable rapidity through inter-marriage and other means.[18]

The ethnography of the regions surrounding the Valley can be traced clearly from the *Rajatarangini*. In the south and west the adjacent hill regions were occupied by the Khasas. Their settlements extended in a semicircle from Kishtwar in the south-east to the Jhelum valley in the west. The hill states of Rajauri and Poonch were held by Khasa families; the dynasty of the latter territory succeeded to the rule of Kashmir in the 11th century. North of the Jhelum valley and as far as Muzaffarabad we find the Bombas as the neighbours of Khasas (later Khakhas) to whom they are closely related. It is probable that Karnah district was held by them already in old times. The upper Kishenganga valley above the famous shrine of Sarada was in old days already, as at present, peopled by Dards who are often referred to by Kalhana as the neighbours of

16. Alberuni, *India*, translated by Sachau, p. 206 sqq.
17. Jonaraja, Tr. by Jogesh Chunder Dutt, p. 57.
18. Lawrence, *Valley*, p.

Kashmir on the north. Their seats extended then, too, probably much further to the north-west, where they are now found in Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit and the intervening region towards Kashmir. Megasthenes already knew them in the Upper Indus regions. Kalhana relating events of his own time speaks of Malechhas further to the north. These might have been Muhammadanised Dards on the Indus and beyond.

The regions immediately to the north-east and east of Kashmir were held by the Bhauttas. These are the modern Bhutta of Dras, Ladakh and the neighbouring districts.[19]

The 'River of Kings'

It is amidst the sketches of early settlements in the Valley that Kalhana begins *Rajatarangini* or the 'River of Kings', with an invocation to Lord Siva in His manifestation as Lord Ardhnarishvara. This form of invocation is significant showing as it does the dominance in the 12th century AD of the Saiva school of philosophy, originally founded by Vasagupta and developed by scholars like Somananda, Utpalacharya, Abhinavagupta and others.

In his introductory verses he eulogises the services of preceding historians who by recording past events and personalities had rendered a great service to posterity. From a study of these records future generations are able to draw moral and political lessons of immense value.

He also makes a mention of the sources of his history. He particularly deplores the loss of detailed records on account of Suvrata's condensed historical *sutras*. Students generally chose the easier path of committing this digest to memory in preference to a study of detailed and exhaustive history, with the result that the latter was neglected and lost.

He then mentions 11 historical works extant at the time and critically examines their merit. He details other historical data, such as old coins, dedicatory notices, inscriptions on temples and on other religious endowments, which he made use of to check and elucidate the events recorded by earlier historians.

Coming to the subject proper, Kalhana extols the merits of Kashmir and lists five features for which it was famous:

"Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes; things that even in heaven are difficult to find are common there."

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19. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, pp. 429-32.

That Kashmir was from ancient times the seat of Sanskrit literature is borne out by the testimony of Heun Tsiang, who visited the Valley five centuries earlier. "The people of Kashmir," he writes, "love learning and are well cultured. Since centuries learning has been held in great reverence in Kashmir." During the course of the past 2,000 years Kashmiri scholars and poets produced works on philosophy, poetry, drama, rhetoric, grammar, poetics and folklore.

The grand ruins of ancient temples dotting the Valley are sufficient evidence of the qualities of Kashmiris as architects and sculptors. During Muslim rule also, when timber replaced stone as the chief building material, Kashmiris distinguished themselves by constructing lofty houses. Mirza Haider Dughlat (1540 AD) in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* admires the skill of Kashmiri craftsmen in the art of building. He specially mentions "lofty buildings constructed of fresh cut pine." Most of these were five storeys high. The beauty of their exterior defied description and "all who behold them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration."

From ancient times saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir and therefore it is called *Kashmiraja* in Sanskrit.

Kalhana goes on to name certain *tirthas* and springs which bestowed holiness on Kashmir. Most of these can be located even today and are held in great veneration by the Kashmiris. The reference to the Nagas is particularly interesting. According to the popular belief in Kashmir, these are considered to be snakes living in the waters of springs and lakes over which they keep guard. They also appear in human form or as clouds or hailstorms. To this day springs are generally called *Nag* in Kashmir.

The Vitasta and its source, Nilakunda, have also been mentioned. Vitasta, which serves as the highway from the south to the north of the Valley, is the chief river and supplies through canals and streams water for the irrigation of most of the paddy land. It is but natural that a feeling of reverence amounting to worship should have prevailed among the people for this river. The author of the *Vitasta Mahatmya* thus sings its praise:

> "The righteous declare this terrestrial
> globe as the best of the triad
> (as in this one can practise
> penances and attain salvation),
> Of that, too, the mountain (Himalayas),
> chosen by the Mother of the Three Worlds
> (Parvati) to take her birth in;

Of that, too, the country of Kashmir —
the abode of blessings, free from all calamities —
Through this country thou, O Vitasta,
flowest, benefiting the people (and)
I offer unto thee my salutation."

It is difficult to judge critically the value of Kalhana's account of the kings who came before Asoka, for there is no independent supporting evidence forthcoming either from within or from the neighbouring territories of Kashmir. In discussing these kings he seems to have followed and explained the local names of kings, real or imaginary, and these continue to influence Kashmir's popular traditions to the present day.

The history of the Valley has been considerably influenced by the relations which Kashmir had from an early date with the Punjab and other hill states by virtue of the community of race, religion and culture and at times political dependence. But unfortunately the knowledge about the early history of these territories is fragmentary and in need of critical study. Hence it is difficult to make out anything resembling an exhaustive treatment of the political and cultural development of the Valley from the early part of the Chronicle.

Kalhana begins the Chronicle with an account of King Gonanda I, whose initial year of reign he places in 653 Kali, the traditional date of the coronation of King Yudhisthira, the Pandava leader.

What Kalhana has to tell us of Gonanda I and his three successors is that he was one of the relations of Jarasanda, the king of Magadha. He was a good and just king. When Jarasanda was in battle with Krishna on the banks of the Yamuna, Gonanda at the head of a large army, went to his aid and besieged Krishna in a fortress. His men fought bravely for a long time but they were routed and he himself was killed by Balabhadra, the brother of Krishna.

After his death his son, Damodra, sat on the throne. Filled with ideas of revenge for his father's death, he waited until Krishna and the other scions of Yadu visited Gandhara on the Indus on the occasion of the *Svayamvara* of the King's daughter. Damodra led an expedition against him, and attacked Krishna. He fought bravely but was killed. His wife Yasovati who was then *enceinte* was made the queen-regent of Kashmir at Krishna's advice.

Here Kalhana casually remarks that the nobles and advisers grumbled that a woman had been crowned queen. But Lord Krishna appeased

them by reciting the following verse from the *Nilamatpurana:*

> "Kashmir is Parvati; know that its king is
> a portion of Siva. Though he be wicked,
> a wise man who desires his own prosperity
> will not despise him."

This calmed the turbulent nobles who thereafter treated Yasovati like a goddess and as 'the mother of the subjects'.

When the queen bore a son, he was named Gonanda II and crowned king in his infancy. About this time the great war of the *Mahabharata* had started and as Gonanda II was young his assistance was not sought by either the Kauravas or the Pandavas. This explains the absence of any mention of the country and its ruler in the accounts of the 'Great War'.

'Lost Kings'

Kalhana then abruptly says that after Gonanda II, "thirty-five kings who follow him have been immersed in the ocean of oblivion, their names and deeds having perished through the destruction of the records."

Kalhana, taking up the narrative, mentions the names of eight more kings, namely, Lava, Kusha, Khagendra, Surendra, Godhara, Suvarna, Janaka and Sachinara, who had preceded Asoka. As already mentioned most of these names are associated with the founding of towns and villages, some of which can still be traced. But nothing is known about the historicity of any of them.

Achaemenian and Greek Invasions

The *Rajatarangini* gives no detailed and authentic information about conditions prevailing in Kashmir and the adjoining regions of north-western India during the pre-Asoka period. But some fragmentary records in Sanskrit of the later Vedic period and notices with regard to Achaemenian and Greek invasions of India show that Kashmir formed a part of Gandhara, the eastern region of Afghanistan.

In the later Vedic period the Brahmanas and the Upanishads mention Gandhara extending on both sides of the Indus with Taxila (Rawalpindi district) and Pushkaravati (modern Charsada, Peshawar) as its principal towns, and in the oldest Buddhist writings it is mentioned that there were 16 great powers *(Solasa mahajanapadas)*, which must have existed in the seventh or the early sixth century BC. The 16th on the list is Gandhara, that is eastern Afghanistan, with its capital at

Pushkaravati and also including Kashmir *(Kashmira Gandhara)*.[20]

The north-western part of Inida seems to have been divided in the latter half of the sixth century BC into a number of petty principalities, and there was no great power to curb their mutual strifes and jealousies. Naturally it provided a strong tempting ground to the imperialism of the Achaemenian monarchy which had risen in Persia about this time under the leadership of Cyrus (C. 558-30 BC). From the accounts of the Greek historians, the Persian king Cyrus appears to have subjugated the Indian tribes of the Paropanisus and the Kabul valley, especially the Gandharians.[21] In the Behustan inscription of Darius, Gadara, that is, Gandhara is mentioned as one of the provinces of his empire. His immediate successors were too busy with affairs in the west to think of the east, but Darius I (522-486 BC) appears to have annexed a portion of the Indus region some time after 518 BC.

It is learnt from Herodotus how Darius I sent an expedition some time in 517 BC under Skylax of Koryanda to explore the possibility of a passage to the sea from the mouths of the Indus to Persia and in that connection mentions Kaspapyros as a city of the Gandharians. It is therefore not unlikely that Kashmir came for some time under the sway of the Achaemenids.

It is significant for the isolated position which its mountain barriers assured to Kashmir that there is no direct mention of the kingdom in the records of Alexander's invasion. The march from Taxila to Jhelum took the Macedonian forces along a line of route which lay comparatively near to the confines of Kashmir. Yet there is no notice in the accounts of Alexander's invasion which can be assumed to imply even a hearsay knowledge of the Kashmir Valley. All we can glean from a reference here and there is that the Valley seems to have been then under the rule of the chief of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera districts).

About the beginning of the spring of 326 BC Alexander crossed the Indus somewhere near Ohind (modern Und, near Attock). He was welcomed at Taxila by Omphis or Ambhi, with rich and attractive presents. Gratified at these gifts Alexander returned them, adding his own, and this won not only the loyalty of the ruler of Taxila but also a contingent of 5,000 soldiers from him. Abhisares, the astute king of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera), who probably held Kashmir Valley as well, surrendered

20. R.S. Tripathi, *History of Ancient India*, pp. 47, 82, 84.
21. Herodotus, I, pp. 152 — 177.

to Alexander of his own accord, thinking that resistance would be of no avail.[22]

At the end of the campaign Alexander made proper arrangements for keeping the conquered parts of the Punjab under his subjection. He placed his new ally, Porus, in charge of all the tract between the Beas and the Jhelum and over 15 republican nations with more than 5,000 cities; and Ambhi of Taxila was given full jurisdiction over the territories west of the Jhelum. Likewise, the ruler of Abhisaras had his authority extended over Kashmir with the State of Arsaces (Urusa-Hazara district) added to his kingdom.[23] And as a counterpoise to the rule of these Indian princes, Alexander stationed adequate Greek garrisons in cities founded by himself on Indian soil.

With the departure of Alexander, a new power was rising in India. Slowly and patiently Chandragupta Maurya was extending his kingdom of Magadha. Northern India was in a state of ferment about the beginning of the last quarter of the fourth century BC. In the Punjab, particularly, the people, divided as they were, smarted under the blows of Alexander's viceroys and Chandragupta did not find it difficult to organise the tribes which had not reconciled themselves to the Greek yoke.

As a result of his treaty with Seleukos, and on the latter's withdrawal to the west, Chandragupta got all the satrapies of north-western India, including Gandhara, where at the time of Alexander's invasion he had been residing as a student at university town of Taxila.[24]

During his successor, Bindusara's reign there was a revolt in Taxila and when Susima, his eldest son and viceroy, cold not quell the disturbance, Bindusara transferred Asoka from Ujjain, and the latter succeeded in restoring order there.

Asoka

With Asoka we come to firm historical ground. Kalhana's account of this great king, though scanty, is of special interest. In spite of a number of surmises to the contrary, there is a concensus of opinion among the historians that the Asoka of Kashmir history was the Emperor

22. Diodorus would, however, have us believe that Embisaros (Abhisares) had made an alliance with Porus and was preparing to oppose Alexander (XVII, 87, ibid, p. 247).
23. M' Crindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, pp. 69 and 111 — 12
24. R.S. Pandit, *River of Kings*, p. 470.

Asoka of Magadha whose dominions extended eastward to Bengal and westward to Hindukush.

The doubt has been caused by the system of chronology followed by Kalhana, according to which Asoka has been placed in 1182 BC. Asoka's date is fortunately one of the most authenticated in early Indian history as falling in the middle of the third century BC and if we give credence to Kalhana's chronological calculations, we should have to place him 900 years before his time.

It would be interesting here to examine and test the accuracy of chronology followed in the early parts of the *Rajatarangini* with regard to this first point of contact between Kalhana's narrative and the ascertained facts of general Indian history.

Kalhana takes as the starting point of his chronological calculations the traditional date indicated by Varahmihra's *Brihatsamhita* for the coronation of Yudhisthira, the Pandava hero of the epics, namely, 653 of the Kali era or 3100 BC.

He records his chronology according to the *Laukika* or *Saptarshi* era, which is still in current use among the Brahmin population of Kashmir. The commencement of this era is placed on *Caitra Shudi* first of Kali Sambat 25 (expired) or the year 3076-75 BC.

The contents of Kalhana's history divide themselves into two great portions from the point of view of the critical tests which can apply to them as historical records. Book i to iii which contain a narrative of the earlier epoch is a record of successive Gonandiya dynasties whose rule is supposed by Kalhana to have filled an aggregate period of nearly 3,050 years. The persons and events which figure in them can rarely be traced in other sources and these too only with considerable variations as to date and character. The narrative of Books iv to viii which extends from the beginning of the Karkota dynasty (seventh century AD) to Kalhana's own time, can be, however, checked in many important points by independent evidence from other sources, such as coins, inscriptions and notices of Indian and foreign writers.

In regard to the chronological information contained in the *Rajatarangini* it is essential to note that there is a marked difference between the forms in which this information is conveyed in the earlier, and in the later portions. In the earlier portion we have no chronological data except such as may be deduced from the stated length of individual reigns and a few general figures. On the other hand, we find that from the concluding part of the Fourth Book onwards, the dates of accession of

individual rulers and of other events of political or economic importance for the kingdom are indicated by the quotation of the exact years of *Laukika* era, coupled in most cases with equally precise statements of the month and date.

Both with regard to the assumption of 2,268 years as the aggregate length of Gonanda I and his successors as detailed in Book i, and 2,330 years of the aggregate duration of reigns from Gonanda III to his own date, Kalhana's chronology presents several inaccuracies which become glaring after a closer study of the text itself. For instance, the average length of reigns of 37 princes of the first three dynasties are 48 years and the average reigns of princes of Book ii and iii come to 32 and 59 years respectively, which is apparently too high, particularly when the average rule of kings of the later period does not exceed 12 years. In Book iii Kalhana gives fully 300 years to king Ranaditya's rule.

With regard to Kaniska and Mihirakula, the two kings, whose respective identity with the famous Kusan ruler of northern India and with the White Hun or Ephthalite ruler of that name, has been established, Kalhana's chronology does not stand a critical test. For, Kaniska according to his calculation would be placed not less than 1,100 years and Mihirakula fully 1,200 years before their time.

From all this, it appears that with regard to early history of Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana, the chronology is not only defective but misleading. Several well-known scholars have devoted their attention to a study of Kalhana's chronology of the *Rajatarangini* particularly in the light of recent archaeological and numismatic discoveries, but so far nothing helpful has come out.[25] We may, therefore, assume the conclusions arrived at by Dr Stein in this respect and accept Asoka — described in the *Rajatarangini* as being the follower of Buddha's religion who built stupas and viharas, a fact corroborated by the statement of Heun Tsiang in the seventh century AD — as the great Asoka of Indian history.

So it was early in his life that Asoka came in contact with Kashmir. Kalhana's brief reference to his building activities in the Valley, however, indicate that his stay was quite prolonged and it may safely be inferred that he paid regular periodic visits to the beautiful Vale.

Kalhana credits him with the foundation of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, with "ninety-six thousand dwelling houses resplendent with prosperity." He also built numerous viharas and stupas, particularly in

25. Pandit Kota Venkatachalam, *Chronology of Kashmir History Reconstructed.*

the vicinity of Sukseletra[26] and Vitastatra.[27] In the Dharmaranya Vihara at the latter place, he built a Caitya so high "that the eye could not see the extent of its height."[28] He built a massive stone wall round the famous Vijayeshwara temple after dismantling the old stucco enclosure and within it built two temples dedicated to Siva under the name of Ahokeswara.[29] He is credited with having propitiated by a fast Lord Bhuteswara[30] at the famous shrine. This is fully in keeping with what from other evidence we conclude, as to Asoka's attitude towards other great religious systems, that he figures in Kashmir record also as the benefactor of the ancient and famous shrine of Vijayeswara, and a worshipper at the Siva shrine at Bhutesa.

By far the most important event connected with Asoka's reign was the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir. At the conclusion of the deliberations of the Buddhist Council held at Patliputra under the presidentship of Moggaliputta Tissa, Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir and Gandhara at the head of an evangelical mission. Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong mention the arrival of 5,000 monks who were settled in Kashmir by Asoka and his gift of the Valley to the Sangha for turning it into a centre of study and propagation of Buddhist religious texts.

THE RISE OF NORTHERN BUDDHISM

The introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir is attributed to a monk called Majjhantika, a disciple of Ananda the constant companion and servitor of the Great Teacher, Gautama Buddha. The Buddhist legend regarding his journey to Kashmir and his victory over the Naga king is a recension of the *Nilamatpurana* legend. A similar tradition appears in *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya pitaka* of Kashmir. In this text, Buddha is said

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26. Sukseletra (modern Hukaletar, 74⁰ 42' long. 34⁰ lat.) seems to have been a favourite place for Buddhist constructions, for Kalhana later mentions Kaniska also to have built stupas and viharas in the locality.
27. Vitastra (modern Vethavotur, 75⁰ 16' long. 30⁰ 33' lat.) is the traditional source of the Vitasta at Verinag and is an ancient place of pilgrimage.
28. Asoka's Srinagar was built at Pandrenthan (ancient Puranadhisthana — old capital), five kilometres to the south of present Srinagar.
29. The famous old shrine of Siva Vijayeswara has given its name to the town of Vijayabror (modern Bijbihara). Two temples built by Asoka were known in the time of Kalhana (12th century AD).
30. The worship of Siva Bhutesa localized near the sacred sites of Mount Harmukata has played an important part in the ancient religion of Kashmir.

to have forecast to Vajrapani that Madhandina, a disciple of Ananda, would propagate his religion in Kashmir, the land of blue forests. He would subdue the malevolent Huluta Naga, and extend the seat on which he would sit cross-legged to miraculously cover the whole of Kashmir, thereby ousting the Nagas from their habitation, and making the vast country of 60,000 villages an abode for meditating monks.

Similar traditions preserved in Buddhist texts testify to the prevalence of Buddhism in Kashmir from the third century BC to the 12th century AD.

> The spread of Buddhism to Kashmir, is an event of extraordinary importance in the history of that religion. Thenceforward that country became a mistress in the Buddhist Doctrine and the headquarters of a particular School — the Mahayana and the Sarvastivadin. The influence of Kashmir was very marked, especially in the spread of Buddhism beyond India. From Kashmir it penetrated to Quandhar and Kabul and thence over Bactria. Tibetan Buddhism had also its essential origin from Kashmir, so great is the importance of this region in the history of this religion.[31]

Historically speaking, Asoka had a hand in the introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir, but his son Jalauka was anti-Buddhist and destroyer of monasteries. He is said to have revived the Naga and Saiva cults. After this set-back for some time, Buddhism was re-established by the Indo-Scythian rulers, particularly Kaniska, Huska and Juska, who built several *caityas* and *mathas* at Suksaletra and other places.

Buddhism again suffered a reverse after the rule of the Kusan rulers and, later in the fifth century AD, it was nearly wiped off the Valley by the Hun ruler Mihirakula. Baka, Mihirakula's son, however, seems to have atoned for his predecessor's sins by restoring the *caityas* and *mathas.* Similarly under Meghavahana, Buddhism again flourished and he and his wife built several viharas and *caityas* and prohibited the slaughter of animals.

Subsequent rulers, it appears were not all supporters of Buddhism and with the rise of the Saiva cult and philosophy, Buddhism though lingering on for some time, was finally replaced by the traditional Brahmanism.

But the story of the glorious role that Kashmir played in the development of Mahayana and its propagation in distant Central Asia

31. Vassilyev, *Der Buddhism,* I — 44.

and China, is still preserved in Buddhist texts and translations in Ceylon, Tibet and China. Kashmir became a high school of Mahayana Buddhism during the time of Kaniska's rule and after, and attracted scholars and pilgrims from distant lands who studied the Buddhist texts at the feet of the learned pandits of the Valley. It was here that the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara found its adherents who carried it to far off places in Central Asia and China.

Before we take up this account it will be useful to trace the history and development of the various Buddhist doctrines culminating in the emergence of Mahayana or Northern Buddhism in which form it is prevalent in China, Tibet, Japan and Nepal. That this school of Buddhism was born in Kashmir and developed by Kashmiri scholars who brought the impress of Kashmir Saivism to bear upon it, is an established fact. It will not, therefore, be out of place to give a brief outline of this very important development in this great religion particularly in relation to the spread of Buddhism in countries beyond the Himalayas.

Development of Mahayana

The teachings of Buddha during his lifetime and immediately afterwards (300 BC) found a ready and enthusiastic audience among the general population of Madhyadesa who realized a new salvation and relief in his doctrine. They had been groaning under the heavy burden of archaic and complicated Brahmanic rites and rituals and the powerful upper castes. It was thus a revolutionary movement aimed at the overthrow of the Brahmanic domination and although Buddhism had some Brahmin followers, the majority came from the lower castes.

> For some two centuries after Gautama's death we have little information as to the geographical extension of his doctrine, but some of the Sanskrit versions of the *Vinaya* represent him as visiting Muttra, North-west India and Kashmir.[32]

There is nothing improbable in the supposition that the first missionary activity was in the direction of Muttra and Kashmir. 'Muttra was the centre of a powerful school of orthodox Brahmanism and Kashmir was from ancient times the seat of Saivism. These two division of the Hindu philosophy dominated the Indian mind from the north to the south and it was, therefore, necessary to convince and convert the learned pandits at these strongholds, just as in the 12th century AD. Ramanuja, leader of the Vaisnava belief, felt compelled to travel from

32. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism & Buddhism*, p. 263.

distant Madras with the special object of combating the rival Saiva creed in Kashmir, its fountain-head.

Besides this, the pleasant climate and beautiful scenery of Kashmir are said to have been praised by Gautama himself. In the *Samyuktavastu* (chap. x1. trans. in *J.A.* 1914) the Buddha is represented as saying that Kashmir is the best land for meditation and leading a religious life. And when, therefore, Buddhism attained the status of a state religion under Asoka, Kashmir was one of the first regions to receive his attention. It was in his time that the second Buddhist council was held at Patliputra which resulted in the codification of the Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle. Asoka visited Kashmir twice and founded the city of Srinagar (Puranadhisthana). He took with him 5,000 monks and built numerous viharas for them there. When he left for his capital he made a gift of Kashmir to the Sangha considering it to be the fittest place for the study and propagation of the Doctrine.

The learned pandits of Kashmir imbued with the spirit of toleration and ever ready to investigate and learn every new thought, received the canon with all the respect due to it and after critically studying it gave it a new interpretation suiting the times and the aspirations of the people. Thus was produced the Mahayana or the Great Vehicle, which while holding fast to the real foundations of Buddhism, its ethical views of self-conduct and charity, is in fact an entirely new religion.

The popularity of old Buddhism rested chiefly on the simplicity of its doctrine, namely, that the state of the untrammelled self (Atman) is bliss and therefore birth is misery. The cause of misery is desire and therefore the cessation of desire and the path leading to that, is right behaviour and right concentration of thought. But the complete denial or negation of the existence of a Supreme Being or a personal God could not for long keep the minds of the general mass of people attached to this form of religion. The end which the followers of the Hinayana school seek is the redemption of man from this toilsome world of birth and death by absorption in the Brahma, not felicity in a higher and better world.

This pessimistic outlook on life and the world was doubly enhanced by the central point of Hinayana — the doctrine of Arhatship, a system of ethical and mental self-culture in which deliverance was found from all mysteries of sorrows of life in a change of heart to be reached here on this earth. This school had taught that Gautama was a Buddha, a man who by self-denying efforts continued through many hundreds of different births had acquired the ten *paramitas* or cardinal virtues in such perfection that he was able, when sin and ignorance had gained the upper

hand throughout the world, to save the human race from impending ruin by preaching the doctrine of Arhatship. In other words the older school laid stress on individual's own efforts for his own salvation.

To the saints and scholars of Kashmir deeply learned in more subtle and higher philosophies, this doctrine seemed crude as well as incapable of keeping the masses attached to it for long. Coming into contact with these master-minds, the simple creed of early Buddhism got permeated with their refined ritualistic and philosophic teachings.

Kashmir, from the earliest times, seems to have been the home of the great division of Hindu religion — Saivism. And well suited it was. Situated in the very heart of the Himalyas and possessing beautiful valleys, springs, rivers, lakes and snow-clad mountains, it seemed to be the land associated with all the mythological stories of Siva and His consort Parvati. The winter when all plant life is dead and the trees are shorn of their leaves; the crisp and life-giving spring when Nature slowly comes to life; and the luscious green summer when all around there is plenty and prosperity, were a dramatic representation of Siva the destroyer, Durga the creator and Parvati the preserver. Amongst such divine surroundings, the great rishis in their quiet hermitages like that of Vasagupta at Harwan, perfected a philosophy of a high order. Although Kashmir Saivism reached its highest glory during the eighth and ninth centuries AD, its origin and study go back to a much earlier period.

The philosophic literature of Mahayana, therefore, bears a deep impress of Kashmir Saivism whose doctrines revolve round their fundamental conceptions of Siva and Sakti. Siva is the Reality which underlies, as its innermost and true self, not only every experiencing being but also everything else in the universe. His nature has primarily a two-fold aspect, an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe and a transcendental aspect in which he is beyond all universal manifestations. And universe with all its infinite variety of objects and means of experience is nothing but a manifestation of the immanent aspect (Sakti). This Sakti is not in any way different from or independent of Siva, but is one and the same with Him and His Creative Power, spoken of as his feminine aspect.

This belief in Siva or a Supreme Being and the adaptation of the various gods and goddesses of the Saiva cult for their own purposes readily filled up the lacunae in early Buddhism (Hinayana).

Besides, the leaders of Mahayana urged their followers to seek to attain, not so much to Arhatship, which would involve their own

salvation but to Bodhisatvaship,[33] by the attainment of which they would be conferring the blessings of the Dhamma upon countless multitudes in the long ages of the future. By thus laying stress on the Bodhisatvaship rather than upon Arhatship, the new school was altering the direction of their mental vision.

The older type of Buddhist could become an Arhat (deserving) and so attain *nirvana* in the sense of annihilation or absorption into the Universal Self. But the newer one could become a Bodhisatva (one whose nature consists in enlightenment, hence destined to become a Buddha) who, though he became entitled by the sanctity of many lives to attain *nirvana* remained alive as a god to help the seeker after release; while Buddha through transcendental philosophical appreciation of him as a superman became a great saviour-god. The old or Lesser Vehicle (Hinayana) could only appeal to the few, whereas the new or the Great Vehicle was open to all. And the opinion that every leader of their religious circle, every teacher distinguished among them for his sanctity of life, or for his extensive learning, was Bodhisatva who might have and who probably had inherited the *karma* of some great teacher of old, gave a new hope and a blissful vision to the traveller on the Path.

> In fact the teachers of the Mahayana school were not slow to perceive that if Buddhism was to gain any hold over the masses, it was essential that it should adapt itself to their human needs. It became imperatively necessary, as a simple preservative measure, to convert a cold philosophical creed based on an ultra-pessimistic theory of existence, into some sort of belief in the value of human life as worth living. And if life was not to be an invariable current of misery it followed that there must also be some sort of faith in a superintending God, controlling their life and interesting Himself in man's welfare.[34]

The chief school of the Mahayanists thus taught devotion to the many Buddhas and their attendant Bodhisatvas; they created for their *nirvana* a dwelling place, a Heaven; and they attributed to the Bodhisatvas the will and the power to give assistance to mankind; Buddhas and Bodhisatvas both being also made subject to transmigration and reincar-

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33. Bodhisatvas are exalted beings who have reached Buddhahood, but who deliberately decline to enter into *nirvana* in order that they might devote themselves to saving mankind. — Rawlinson, *India.*
34. Sir M. Monier Willams, *Buddhism in its connexion with Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 173.

nation. Thus they evolved the worship of Maitreya, the Dhyani Buddhas, Manjusri, and Avlokiteswar. The first of these appears in ancient Buddhism as the name of the Buddha to come and the last is the holy spirit of the Mahayanist school. Among the Dhyani Buddhas who are philosophic abstractions corresponding to earthly Buddhas, Amitabha, that is, Infinite Light, is the Heavenly counterpart of Gautama and soon took the most important place. Avlokiteswar proceeds from him and manifests him to the world since the death of Buddha.[35] He is like Siva, destroyer of the evil and the fountain of eternal bliss. Sakti the manifestation of energy is the essential counterpart of Siva and is often worshipped more than the latter. Similarly the female counterpart of the male Avlokiteswar is the form of the god chiefly worshipped in China and Japan. In these countries he is known in the feminine character of Kwan-Yin, 'Goddess of Mercy', and in this form is represented with two arms but often with four or more.

The connection of Avlokiteswar with Siva," says Sir M. Monier Williams, "is proved by the fact that in some characteristics Kwan-Yin corresponds to Durga form of Siva's wife and in others to the form called Parvati, who as dwelling in the mountains, may be supposed to look down with compassion on the world."

As may be expected voluminous literature on the new doctrine and its various branches was written during and before the reign of Kaniska. The home of early Buddhism was round about Kosala and Maghada, subject indeed to Brahmin influence, but where the sacred language was never more than a learned tongue and where the exclusive claims of the Brahmins had never been universally admitted. The Mahayana or the Great Vehicle arose in the very stronghold of Brahmanism and among a people to whom Sanskrit was a familiar tongue. The new literature, therefore, which the new movement called forth was written and has been preserved in Sanskrit.

The philosophy developed chiefly on the lines of Sarvastivadins (All Things Exist System) or realist School. Nagarjuna, the philosopher who lived in the first century AD and was a contemporary of Kaniska, is the founder of the Madhyamika or the Middle Way which ended in Buddhist Kanteism. Later on Asangha and Vasubandhu laid the foundation of a third school, the Vignanvad, holding that all phenomena are illusions and nothing but the thought.

Though the early Buddhist doctrine had been carried to China

35. Ibid

through Indian missionaries in the second century BC it could not take a firm root there. It was, however, three centuries later that Mahayana, after gaining in strength and popularity and attaining the status of a state religion under Kaniska, was with great success carried to Central Asia and China mostly by Kashmirian missionaries.

Asoka died about 232 BC after a reign of 40 years. When the sceptre dropped from his hands, the fortunes of the Mauryan dynasty began to suffer decline. Traditions regarding his successors are discrepant. Of his sons, Tivara alone is named in the edicts, and perhaps he predeceased his father as he is not heard of subsequently.

Kalhana says that Asoka worshipped the God Siva Bhutesa at the famous shrine of Harmukutaganga in Kashmir and "obtained from the God, whom he had pleased by his austerities, a son."

This son, Jalauka, appears to have become independent in Kashmir after his father's death. Saint Avadhuta, "the vanquisher of Bauddha controversialists," was his religious preceptor.

Jalauka was a popular hero and an ardent devotee of Siva and used to worship daily at Bhutesa and Vijayeswara shrines. To cover the distance which is fully four days' journey by foot, he had arranged a relay of ponies all along the route. At first an opponent of Buddhists, he became friendly to them finally. Kalhana records a local tradition of unmistakable Buddhist colouring to show how the king modified his attitude to the Buddhists through divine intercession.

Kalhana tells us that during the latter part of Asoka's reign the country was harassed by the incursions of the Mlechhas (foreigners)[36] and Jalauka is described as a great warrior who cleared the land of these oppressors and made extensive conquests. He is said to have overrun Kanauj and Gandhara and brought from these places men of letters whom he settled in Kashmir.

Incidentally, Kalhana gives a clue to the administrative system in Kashmir at that time.

> Up to that time there existed in this land, which had not yet reached its proper development in legal administration, wealth and other respects, a government like in most countries. There were only seven main state officials; the judge, the revenue superintendent, the treasurer, the commander of the army, the envoy, the Purohita, and the astrologer. By establishing eighteen offices (Karmasthana) in

36. Perhaps Mlechhas refer to Bactrian Greeks.

accordance with traditional usage, the king created from that time onwards a condition of things as under Yudhisthira.[37]

Jalauka is the hero of many traditions recorded by Kalhana. Once, runs the legend, the king heard of the sanctity of the Sodara spring (Naran Nag) from the Nandipurana, and thenceforth used to worship at that spring. He wished that it might be near the shrine of Jyestrarudra which he was building at Srinagar. Being engrossed with some work he forgot one day his daily observance and could not take his bath from the Naran Nag spring, when lo! to his great surprise he found a spring breaking forth in a waterless spot at Srinagar "which was alike to Sodara in colour, taste and other respects."

This king founded several villages, amongst which was Varabala, which is now known by the name of Barawal and situated on the right bank of the river Kankanai about two kilometres above its confluence with the Sindh river. He offered to the Jyestrarudra temple 100 women of his seraglio who used to dance daily before the idol.[38] His wife, Ishanadevi, built temples on the approaches to the Valley. The king together with his queen retired after a reign of 60 years to Siramochana and there passed away.

Damodara, who was a descendant of Asoka, "or belonged to some other family", succeeded to the throne. He was a supporter of Saivism. He founded a city on a plateau in Yachh Pargana which is thenceforth called Damodar Udar after his name. In order to raise water to this town, he constructed a long dam called Gudda Suth. "When", deplores Kalhana, "a high-minded man wishes to execute some beneficial work of an extraordinary character, there arise, alas! obstacles, owing to the deficiency of men's spiritual merits from former births." One day he was going to the river Jhelum to have his bath after a *Shradh* ceremony, when some Brahmins asked him for food before taking his bath. The king replied, "I cannot feed you before bathing. Go away *(sarpata)* sharp." Thereupon the Brahmins cursed him, "May you be transformed into a serpent *(sarpa)*." Damodara was dismayed and begged their mercy. The curse could not be taken back. "But when you will hear the whole Ramayana recited in a single day the effect of our curse will cease." Damodara became a snake and it is believed that even to the present day he is roaming in that form amidst the dark solitudes of the plateau.

37. For explanation of " eighteen traditional Departments of State" see Pandit, *River of Kings,* p. 19.
38. Below mount Haramukuta. Perhaps a reference to Wangat the spot where later a group of temples was built.

Damodar Udar is now the site of the Srinagar airfield.

The legend about King Damodara being transformed into a snake is still current among the local inhabitants. Satras Teng, a waste spot high up on the *karewa* is named as the site of Damodara's place and a spring at the adjoining hamlet of Lalgam as the place where the king performed his ablutions.[39]

Indo-Greek Occupation

After the fall of the Mauryan Empire, north-western India was subjected to several foreign invasions and it is significant that there is a gap of at least 200 years in the *Rajatarangini* between the death of Damodra II and the advent of the Kusan rule.

It has been noted how Jalauka waged a ruthless war against Mlechhas, who were probably Indo-Greek hordes trying to establish their kingdom in territories bordering on Kashmir. Tarn[40] suggests that for a few years Demetrius was the lord of a realm which included southern Kashmir. A fragment in Ptolemy (VII, 42) gives the name of two provinces in Menander's home kingdom east of the Jhelum of which Kaspeira, the upper valleys of the Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi would correspond to southern Kashmir.

We have it on the authority of *Milindapanha* that the discussion between Nagasena, the Buddhist saint and Milinda or Menander, the Indo-Greek ruler of north-western India, was held at a place only 12 *yojans* from Kashmir.[41]

Cunningham records a large find of silver coins of Azes and Azilises on the bank of the Jhelum river, in the hills between Baramula and Jhelum.[42] All this points to a definite rule though temporary, of the Indo-Greeks over Kashmir.[43]

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39. Stein, trans, of *Rajatarangini*, p. 29.
40. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 155.
41. *Milindapanha*, ed. Trenckner, pp. 82,83.
42. *Coins of the Indo-Scythians*, p. 44
43. A reference to the Sediman legend current in Kashmir may be made here. According to Hasan who bases his authority on the history of Mulla Ahmad, Domodara II was succeeded by his son Narendra, in whose time a saint from "abroad called Sediman arrived in an aerial car" and the king held religious discourses with him, the two spending many days and nights together. Ultimately the king preferred the company of the saint to the throne and left along with him, leaving the kingdom to be ruled by the Turushka princes Huska, Juska and Kaniska.
    Could Sediman be actually Menander or any other India-Greek king?

This contact with the Greek is responsible for the beautiful architectural and sculptural style of the old Kashmir temples, which have won admiration from visitors to the Valley. The coinage of the later kings has also been influenced by this contact. But the most important of all is the development of Gandhara or the Graeco-Buddhist art, depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha. The aquiline nose, the large lotus eye and the folded drapery found in the terracotta and stone images unearthed at Ushkur near Baramula and some other places, indicate the deep Grecian influence on the Kashmirian artists following this contact.

The last Greek ruler of the frontier regions and the Kabul valley was Hermaeus, who flourished about the middle of the first century BC.[44] Hemmed in by enemies on all sides, he succumbed to the pressure of the advancing Kusans under Kujala Kadphises. The Greek power had been internally weakened and could not withstand the inroads of these 'barbarian hordes'.

The facts regarding the origin and movement of the great Kusan race whose sway extended from the farthest corners of Central Asia to the borders of Bengal may be briefly mentioned here.[45]

In the second century BC a movement of population started in the vast Central Asian region which profoundly affected the histories of Central Asia and India for a number of centuries to come. The Graeco-Bactrian dominion was overwhelmed entirely about 162 BC by the Yu-echi, nomad people, who had been driven westwards from their settlements on the borders of China by the Hiung-nu, the Huns of Degnignes. According to the oldest Chinese history, the Yu-echi lived in the vicinity of present day Kansu province and about 177 BC were subjugated like all their neighbours by the Tukharian Hiung-nu. Between 167-161 BC they renewed the struggle without success. Lao-Shang, the Khan of Hiung-nu slew their king Chang-lun, and made a drinking cup of his skull, and the great mass of the vanquished people (the Great Yu-echi) left their homes and moved westward reaching and subduing the kingdom of Ki-pin (Kabul Valley). In 138 BC the king of China sent a certain Chang Ch'ien to urge them to return and help him to clear the caravan route by thrusting back the Hiung-nu. But the Yu-echi were too happily settled in a rich and peaceful land to listen to his representations and he returned to China reaching there in 126 BC.

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44. Tarn, ibid., pp. 331, 337.
45. For notice of the historical data relating to these early Indo-Scythian rulers compare Von Gutschmid in *Encycl. Brit.* xviii, p. 606, Drouin *Le Rois Indo-Scythe,* p.46.

In about 15 AD, Kadphises I, a chieftain of the Kusan clan of Yu-echi welded together all the sections of the Yu-echi nation and conquered Afghanistan. He was succeeded by his son Kadphises II probably in 45 AD who conquered north-western India as far as Banaras. Kaniska succeeded him in 78 AD and extended his empire to the borders of Bengal.[46]

Kaniska

With the names of the three Kusan kings, Huska, Juska, Kaniska, we reach once more the terra firma of historical record. The identity of Kaniska with the great Kusan or Indo-Scythian ruler of north-western India, so well known to us from Buddhist traditions, the coins and inscriptions, was recognised long ago. The name of Huska, frequent enough in the form of Huviska on the coins and inscriptions, has been borne out by epigraphical evidence. Juska alone remains to be searched for. Kalhana's account of the reign of these kings, who are supposed to have ruled simultaneously, is brief enough, but is undoubtedly based on genuine historical traditions. It clearly describes them as princes of Turuska nationality, as powerful sovereigns and as faithful patrons of the Buddhist Church. On these points the statements of the Chronicle are fully supported by the most authentic records. The continued existence of the three places, Kaniskapur, Huskapur and Juskapur, which are described as foundations of these kings and which survive to this day, is likely to have assisted in preserving the recollection of their founders.

That Kashmir was included in the wide dominions of the great Kusan dynasty is a fact amply attested by the combined evidence of Buddhist records and the coins, copper pieces of Kaniska and Huviska being found in profusion at many of the old sites in Kashmir.

> The beginning of the Christian era was a period when north-western India witnessed a great fusion of ideas and Indian, Persian and Greek religion must have been in contact at the university town of Taxila and countries round about it. Kashmir too, if somewhat secluded to be a meeting place of nations, was a considerable intellectual centre.[47]

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46. Three interesting gold coins of the Kusans similar to Kusan coins of Kashmir were discovered in the Rajshahi Division, Bengal. (JASB, Vol. XXVIII, p. 130).
47. Eliot, op. cit.

All this is amply proved by the different legends and figures depicted on the coins of Kaniska, the most famous of the Kusan conquerors who ruled over north-western India and Central Asia. His authority had its nucleus in Kashmir but it extended to both sides of the Himalayas from Yarkand and Khotan to Agra and Sind. It has been established that at the beginning of his reign he was not a Buddhist but adopted this creed later on, perhaps due to the influence of the Kashmirian monks whom he patronised. He was so enamoured of his new religion that he wanted to beat the record of Asoka in its propagation. But the existence of conflicting and contradictory schools of thought among the followers of Buddha's religion, confused him and, therefore, under the advice of Parsva his religious preceptor, he decided to call a Council of the learned doctors on the model of the one held at Patliputra during Asoka's reign. It was as a direct result of Asoka's Council that Buddhism was carried to countries south of the Indian peninsula — Ceylon, Burma, Java, etc. Kaniska's Council gave a fresh impetus to the faith. Tibet, south Central Asia, and China lay along the great missionary routes of Northern Buddhism; the Kirghiz are said to have carried Buddhist settlements as far as the Caspian; on the east the religion was introduced into Korea in 372 AD and thence into Japan in 552 AD.[48] The Council is important also for the fact that it marks the point of separation between northern and southern Buddhism, from now onwards Mahayanists gained a position superior to that of the Hinayanists.

According to Buddhist tradition, Kaniska held the third Buddhist Council in Kashmir and Heun Tsiang on his visit to the Valley found still the memory of that ruler fully alive in the kingdom. The popularity and the power enjoyed by Buddhism in Kashmir, under the sway of the Turuska kings, as observed by Kalhana, is historically correct.

Heun Tsiang gives a vivid picture of the proceedings of the Council collected from a study of its records and reports maintained in different libraries in Kashmir which were extant then. Paramarth (499-560 AD) in his *Life of Vasubandhu* also gives an account of the Council, but though differing in detail generally agrees with the observations of Heun Tsiang. He says that the king acting in consultation with Parsva issued summons to all the learned doctors of his realm. They came in such numbers that a severe test was imposed and only 499 Arhats were selected. There was some discussion as to the place of meeting but finally Kashmir was selected and the king built a residential monastery for the Brethren to

48. W.W. Hunter in *Ancient India*, p. 161.

reside and hold their meetings in.[49]

When the Council met at the Kundalvan Monastery near the capital of Kashmir,[50] there arose a question as to whether Vasumitra should be admitted, seeing that he was not an Arhat but aspired to the career of a Bodhisatva. However, later on he was not only admitted but made the President. This was a signal victory for the Mahayanists. Other celebrated scholars including Asvagosh, Vasumitra and Nagarjuna took part in the deliberations. Writes Heun Tsiang:

> Then there were in the congregation certain priests versed in the doctrine of the Great Vehicle, *viz.*, Visudhasimha, Jinabandhu, and of the Sarvastivadin school the following: Sugatamitra, Vasumitra; and of the school of Mahasangika the following: Surgadar and Jinamitra.

About the scholars of Kashmir who took part in the Council, Heun Tsiang remarks:

> The country from remote times was distinguished for learning and these priests were all of high religious merit and conspicuous virtues, as well as of manner, talent and power of exposition of doctrine; and though the priests of other nations were in their own way distinguished yet they could not be compared with these — so different were they from the ordinary class.[51]

The Council which sat for six months made strenuous efforts to bring into order the scattered sayings, theories and dictums of various doctors of the Law. The texts of the *Tripitaka* were collected and the Council "composed 100,000 stanzas of Upadesh Sastras explanatory of the Canonical sutras; 100,000 stanzas of Vinaya Vibhasa Sastras, explanatory of the *Vinaya;* and 100,000 stanzas of Abhidharma Vibhasa Sastra, explanatory of the *Abhidharma*. For this exposition of the *Tripitaka* all the learning from remote antiquity was thoroughly examined; the general sense and the terse language was again and again made clear and distinct and learning was widely diffused for the safe guiding of the disciples."

The Kaniska commentaries were written in the Sanskrit language because the Kashmiri and the northern priests who formed his Council belonged to the isolated Aryan colonies, which had been little influenced by the growth of the Indian vernacular dialects. In this it was distinct from Asoka's Council who wrote all their books in Pali.

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49. Eliot; op. cit.
50. Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 283.
51. *Life*, translated by Beal.

> King Kaniska caused the treatise when finished to be written out on copper plates and enclosed these in stone boxes which he deposited in a tope made for the purpose. He then ordered spirits to keep and guard the texts and not to allow any to be taken out of the country by heretics (non-Buddhists); those who wished to study them could do so in the country. When leaving to return to his country, Kaniska renewed Asoka's gift of all Kashmir to the Buddhist Church.[52]

Although some efforts have recently been made to find the buried copper plates engraved with the proceedings of the Council, no trace has yet been found of them. They perhaps still lie somewhere nearabout the old city of Srinagar and wait to be unearthed by some future lucky archaeologist.[53]

Kaniska's Council marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Buddhism. The Council gave an official and a superior status to the Mahayanist Doctrine which may rightly be said to have been a gift from Kashmiri Brahmins to Buddhism.

Distinguished Acaryas

The composition of the Vibhasa-sastras in Kashmir indicates that Kashmir grew up to be an academic centre attracting distinguished *acaryas* from other places. The accounts of the Chinese travellers and Paramartha show that Katayaniputra, Asvaghosa, Vasubandhu, Vasumitra, Dharmatrata, Sanghabhadra, Visuddhasimha, Jinabandhu, Suagtamitra, Suryadeva, Jinatrata, Kankavatsa and many other distinguished teachers and writers lived in Kashmir form the time of Kaniska. Taranath tells us that during the reign of Kaniska, one wealthy Brahmin called Sutra maintained the Vaibhasika teacher Dharmatrata and the earliest Sautrantika teacher Mahabhadanta Sthavira along with their disciples. Dharmatrata is well known as one of the four renowned *acaryas* of the Vaibhasika school, the other three being Ghosaka of Tukhara, Vasumitra of Maru, and Buddhadeva of Varanasi. Vasumitra is another famous figure of Kashmir, but there are five authors bearing this name. The Sautrantika teacher Srilabha was an inhabitant of Kashmir. He was a disciple of Kunala. Sanghabhadra was another Kashmirian *acarya* who was a profound scholar of the Vibhasa-sastras of the Sarvastivada school. He wrote a commentary on Vasumitra's *Prakar-*

52. Ibid.
53. The present writer was told by late Madhusudan Kaul, Superintendent of Kashmir Research Department that Kundalvan may be identified with Kuntilun on the spur of Zebwan hill overlooking the Dal Lake in Srinagar.

anapada and was the author of the *Abhidharmavatara-sastra.* One of his distinguished students is Vasubandhu who studied with him the six systems of philosophy and the art of dialectics. He compressed the *Abhidharma* texts and their Vibhasas in his *Abhidharmakosa* and *Bhasya* and sent them to the Kashmir Vaibhasikas who were greatly pleased with them. Vasubandhu later on turned from the Sarvastivada point of view to the Sautrantika as is evidenced in the expression of his opinions in the *Bhasya* and which elicited vehement criticisms from Sanghabhadra who was a staunch Sarvastivadin and wrote two treatises to refute Vasubandhu's later views.

Gunaprabha and Vimalamitra are the two other teachers whose names occur in the Records of Heun Tsiang. Gunaprabha is mentioned by Taranath and Bu-stone as a great authority on the *Vinaya* of the Mulasarvastivadin and as the author of several works. Heun Tsiang refers to the monastery at Matipur where he composed his treatises. As regards Vimalamitra, Heun Tsiang writes that he was a native of Kashmir and an adherent of the Sarvata (that is, Sarvastivada) school having made a profound study of canonical and heterodox scriptures. He had travelled in India to learn the mysteries of the *Tripitaka.*

Kashmiri Buddhist Missionaries

As a result of Kaniska's Council, there burst forth an enthusiastic missionary spirit among the Kashmiris who carried this religion to China across difficult passes and thus produced a great fermentation and controversy in Chinese thought. One has only to compare the China of the Hans with the China of the T'angs to see how great was the change wrought by this faith. The diffusion of the Indian influence was due to the activities of these missionaries which were exclusively Buddhist and the preponderating number came from Kashmir.[54]

The intervening tract of Central Asia came naturally first under the influence of the Buddhist doctrine. Although the movement of Central Asian tribes commonly took the form of invading India, yet the current of culture was in the opposite direction.

For instance, traditions respecting the origin of Khotan preserved in the travels of Heun Tsiang and also in the Tibetan Scriptures some of which are expressly said to be translations from the language of the Li, are popular legends, but they agree in essentials and appear to contain a kernel of important truth, namely, that Khotan was founded by two

54. Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels.*

streams of colonisation coming from China and from India, the latter being somehow connected with Asoka. It is remarkable that the introduction of Buddhism is attributed not to these original colonists but to a later missionary who, according to Heun Tsiang, came from Kashmir. The Tibetan text gives the date of conversion as the reign of King Vijayasambhava, 170 years after the foundation of Khotan. At that time, a monk named Vairocana who was an incarnation of Manjusri, came to Khotan from Kashmir. He is said to have introduced a new language as well as Mahayanism and the King Vijayasambhava built for him the great monasterty of Tsarma outside the capital, which was miraculously supplied with relics (about 80 BC or 60 AD).[55]

Kashmiri Missionaries in China

Among numerous scholars and Buddhist monks who elected to work in China as exiles from their mother country, for the sacred mission of carrying to China the message of Indian and Buddhist culture, a short account of a few as recorded in the Chinese texts would be of interest. That a number of Kashmiri monks and missionaries risked their lives to carry the message across difficult mountain passes, can easily be imagined, considering the rapid spread of Buddhism in the vast sub-continent of China.

> Kashmir takes the leading part in the transmission of Buddhist traditions directly to China. The number of Buddhist scholars who went to china from Kashmir is larger than that of those who went from other parts of India. Kashmir was the most flourishing centre of Buddhist learning in India in this period. It was the centre of the most powerful Buddhist sect of Northern India, the Sarvastivada.[56]

Much of the missionary activity of the Kashmirian Buddhists seems to have been centred round the celebrated Kumarajiva who must have made many intimate connections with the Kashmiri scholars of his time while he was receiving education in Kashmir.[57] His father Kumarayana is said to have been a minister of a petty king by hereditary right. For reasons not known he gave up this job and went to Kucha where he slowly rose to the position of Rajguru. While in Kucha a princess, Jiva, of the royal family fell in love with him and they were married. They had a son whom they named Kumarajiva. We learn that just after his birth Jiva, his

55. Stein, *Ancient Khoten.*
56. Dr P.C. Bagchi, *India and China.*
57. William Gemmel in his translation of the *Diamond Sutra* says that Kumarajiva was a native of Kashmir.

mother, turned a nun, taking the responsibility of Kumarajiva's upbringing herself. After giving him some rudimentary education at Kucha, she took him, while only of nine years, to Kashmir for further study. In Kashmir he studied under a learned Buddhist scholar Bandhudatta. Kumarajiva's intelligence and manners won him many admirers and friends among his fellow students and teachers and when after completing his studies, he returned to Kucha he was accompanied there by a large number of Kashmirian scholas. At Kucha he established a monastery and undertook the translation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts and in collaboration with his Kashmirian followers explained these to the Central Asian and Chinese audiences which flocked to hear his sermons.

Living though in this remote corner of Asia his fame spread far and wide and he was recognised as a living encyclopaedia of Indian learning including a knowledge of the Vedas. In 383 AD Fu-Chien, Emperor of the Tsin dynasty sent his general Lu-kuang to subdue Kucha. The expedition was successful and among the captives taken was the celebrated Kumarajiva. Lu-kuang was so pleased with the magnificent and comfortable life of Kucha that he thought of settling there, but Kumarajiva prophesied that he was destined to higher things. So they left to try their fortune in China. Lu-kuang rose to be the ruler of the state known as southern Liang and his captive and adviser became one of the greatest names in Chinese Buddhism. At the express request of the Chinese Emperor he consented to go to the capital in 401 AD. He carried on his mission there and was later joined by many of his Kashmirian monks. He died in the capital of China in 413 AD.

Kumarajiva himself was a literary genius or at least had a genius for clarifying the minds of some good scholars whom the emperor of his day lent to him for translation work, for example, the two celebrated Kashmiri collaborators of his, Yasa and Vimalaksha. Between them the members of this group succeeded in giving a real Chinese contact to ideas which had hitherto been only nebulous and elusive. The most influential of the many works translated by Kumarajiva and his collaborators was the "Lotus Flower Scripture of the Mysterious Law." There had been three or four translations of it before, but not apparently with any great success. This time it got home, as well it might. It is an amazing work, a drama of time and eternity.[58]

Mereopole says that Kashmiri monks went and spread Buddhism in other parts of China. A Kashmiri monk, Sanghabuti, reached the northern

58. E.R. Hughes and K. Hughes, *Religion in China*

capital of China in 381 AD. His activities can be traced till 383-84. At the request of Chinese scholars, he translated some Buddhist texts like *Vinayapitaka* from Sanskrit to Chinese. He also wrote an exhaustive commentary on it. It is not known whether he returned to Kashmir or passed the rest of his life in China.

While Sanghabuti was in China a greater scholar named Gautamsangha went from Kashmir to the northern capital of China with a number of Kashmirian followers. He reached Ch'ang-ngan in 384 AD. The Chinese records mention that he was a profound scholar and a born teacher. He stayed for a few years at Ch'ang-ngan, where he translated a number of Buddhist texts into Chinese. Being a master of Abhidharma he wrote several books on this branch of Buddhism and also revised many previous translations of the texts. He had acquired a proficiency in the Chinese language. Later he came to know that a powerful school of Buddhist learning had been established at Lu-shan in the south of China by a Sogdian monk, Hui-yuan, who by the way played a great part in the co-ordination of Buddhist learning in China. Gautamsangha, therefore, decided to go to Lu-shan and reaching there in 391 AD gave himself up heart and soul to the propagation of the Buddhist doctrine. There also he translated a number of Buddhist texts with the help of his Kashmirian collaborators. Thence he went to Nanking and gained enormous influence among the ruling classes. One of the nobles built a monastery for him where he carried on his literary work.

Two Kashmirian scholars associated with the great Kumarajiva have been mentioned by the Chinese texts in connection with the translation of Buddhist sacred books and writing of commentaries thereon. They are Punyatrata and his pupil Dharmayasa. We do not know much about Punyatrata except that he perhaps went to China at the invitation of Kumarajiva towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century and worked with him in 404 AD. He was also at Kucha when Kumarajiva was taken as prisoner to China and followed him there to help him in his missionary work.

About Dharmayasa we know a little more. He was the son of a Kashmiri Brahmin and came in contact with Punyatrata at the age of 14. After thoroughly studying the Buddhist and other literature he left for China at the age of thirty. He travelled extensively in Asia, converting a large number of people to his faith and writing books. He reached China sometimes in between 397 and 401 and remained there till 432 or 435. In collaboration with a large number of Kashmirian scholars then working in China, he translated several important works into Chinese. He then

returned to Central Asia and probably to Kashmir.

Among the celebrated Kashmirian monks who were adventurous enough to travel across the high mountains into China, the name of Buddhayasas stands high. He was the only son of a Kashmiri Brahmin who was no believer in Buddhism. One day a monk called at his door for alms, but the old Brahmin in his rage attacked him and turned him out. Retribution followed soon. The hand that had struck the monk was paralysed and in order to expiate the sin, the Brahmin went in search of him. He requested him to come to his house and meekly and devoutly begged for pardon and to show his deep reverence to the monk offered him his only son Yasa to be taken into the fold. The monk accepted him. Yasa was then only 13 years of age and after undergoing a thorough training in the various Buddhist texts was given the robe of a monk. At the age of 27 he left for China to preach to the people there. He reached Kashghar where while partaking of a feast given annually by the Chief of that city to the Buddhist monks he attracted the Chief's attention. There were 3,000 more in the city but the demeanour and the vast learning of Yasa captivated the mind of the Chief who became his devout follower and kept him in Kashghar for a number of years. It was here that he came in contact with Kumarajiva who was travelling to Kucha and who stayed in Kashghar for some time. Both of them worked together at some translation. When Kucha was invaded by the Chinese the Chief of Kashghar went to its aid leaving Yasa in charge of his son. But he was too late, Kucha having meanwhile fallen to the Chinese general and Kumarajiva taken as a prisoner to China. When Yasa learnt of this his heart saddened and he longed to join Kumarajiva in Ch'ang-ngan. Here also he was responsible for translating a number of works into Chinese. When Kumarajiva died, Yasa lost heart and returned to Kashmir. Between 410-413 AD he translated four works into Chinese among which were *Dirghagama* and *Dharmaguptaka-Vinaya*. He was a monk of high moral sense and always refused to accept any presents in cash or kind, saying that to accept presents was derogatory to a monk.

The name of Vimalaksha is heard to be another collaborator of Kumarajiva who had gone with him to Kucha and when he was taken as a prisoner to China, followed him there. He worked with him in China from 406 to 413 AD translating several works with him there and explaining them to the people and the students. After Kumarajiva's death in 413 he went to south China and worked there for the rest of his life.

South China had also its batch of Kashmiri missionaries. Buddhajiva, who was a collaborator and companion of Fa-Hien reached

south China by sea in 423. Fa-Hien had during his travels in Central Asia and India collected a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts some of which were later translated by Buddhajiva into the Chinese language. He also probably worked in China for the rest of his life.

But one of the greatest sons of Kashmir who was responsible for converting the whole of Java and the neighbouring islands to the Buddhist faith was Gunavarman. He was a prince of the royal family of Kashmir. His grandfather Haribhadra being a tyrant was banished from his kingdom and had to spend the rest of his life as a wanderer in mountains and marshes. His father, Sanganand, also was in exile. From his very childhood Gunavarman was religious by nature and at an early age he thoroughly grasped the Buddhist Scriptures and committed thousands of *sutras* to memory. It appears that at that time the king of Kashmir died issueless and the nobles and ministers decided to invite Gunavarman to be the king. But he was so imbued with the religious and missionary zeal that he refused the offer and instead started on a long pilgrimage to the holy Buddhist places in India. He then went to Ceylon where he was warmly welcomed by the Buddhist community. He worked with eminent scholars there and was responsible for improving the customs of the people of Ceylon. Thence he went to Java. Fa-Hien tells us that in 418 AD Brahminism flourished in Java and the Buddhists were not worth mentioning. This position, however, changed altogether only a few years later due to the preachings of Gunavarman. The king and his family were the first to be converted by him to the Buddhist faith in 423 AD and the population soon followed suit. Being a Kashmiri, Gunavarman was most probably a Sarvastivadin which explains the study of this school of philosophy by the Javanese Buddhists.

Gunavarman's fame spread far and wide and emissaries from the neighbouring islands came in large numbers inviting him to visit their homeland. At last the Emperor of China also came to know about his work and the Buddhist theologians there requested him to send emissaries to Java to ask Gunavarman to visit China. When they came to him, he agreed to go to Nanking where he reached in 431 AD after converting nearly all the islands on the way. In Nanking, the Emperor himself went out to receive him and built a magnificent monastery for him — Jetavanvihara — after the name of the famous monastery in India.

Gunavarman was, however, destined to live only for a year in Nanking where he died in 432 AD. But it seems that this last year of his life was of intense activity since no less than 14 works were either translated or written by him in this year.

The mention of Jetavana monastery reminds us of another Kashmirian monk who worked there and probably met Gunavarman in 431. He was Dharmamitra, a famous teacher of Dhyana or meditative school. He translated several Sanskrit works on meditation into the Chinese language and also taught a large number of students in this branch of Buddhist philosophy. He was a quiet worker. At first he had gone to Kucha where the authorities would not allow him to proceed to China. He, however, evaded the frontier guards and reached Tun-huang where he founded a monastery and planted thousands of trees around it. It was in 424 AD that he went to South China and lived there up to his death. in 442 AD. He translated 12 Buddhist texts into the Chinese language.

Buddhavarman, another Kashmiri monk went to western China shortly before 433 AD and being a specialist in Vibhasa translated *Mahavibhasa-sastra* in 60 chapters during the years 437-439 AD.

There was another Kashmirian missionary, Ratnacinta, who originally belonged to a royal family and was a specialist in Vinaya. He went to China reaching Lo-yang in 693 AD. He founded a monastery there named T'ien-chu-sse, "The Monastery of India" and translated seven works from Sanskrit between 693 to 706. He died in 721 AD.

During the tenth century the Chinese Annals mention the name of T'ien-si-tsai, a native of Kashmir, who came to the Chinese capital and was put in charge of a board of translators by the Chinese emperor and it was as a result of his efforts that the board was able to enrich the Chinese Buddhist literature by more than two hundred works.

In 1005 another Kashmiri monk Mu-lo-she-ki, went to China and carried on the missionary work in collaboration with many more Indian monks.

Kashmir had been the high school of Buddhist teachings. Numerous scholars well versed in the different philosophical branches of this great doctrine laboured at producing works of deep merit and imparting education to students coming from far and near. Indian students who came to Kashmir for higher studies were inspired by the example of Kashmirian workers in China and after hearing of their wonderful exploits many of them followed their footprints in that land.

Missionaries in Tibet

Let us now turn our attention to the mysterious land of Tibet and influence of Buddhism upon its people.[59]

59. For a fuller treatment of this subject please see the author's *kashmir and Central Asia*, p. 177-97.

Though the earliest entrance of Buddhism into Tibet, was from India proper, yet Kashmir twice in the history of Tibetan Buddhism played a most important part. As a direct result of Kaniska's Council, numerous missionaries went forth from Kashmir to spread the doctrine in Tibet. Many of the pandits who laboured at the translation of the sacred books into Tibetan were Kashmiris and it was even in Kashmir that several of the translations were made. But these were not the only circumstances that made Kashmir the holy land to the Northern Buddhists. In the end of the ninth century, the religion was extirpated in Tibet by the Julian of the Lamas, the great persecutor Lang Dharma, and when it was restored a century later, it was from Kashmir in particular that fresh missionaries were procured to reinstruct the people in the forgotten Law.[60]

At present the Tibetans are either the followers of the Bonpa or that of the Lama religions, which flourish side by side, and are often indistinguishable from one another except perhaps through the colour of the dress worn by the monks of the two orders. The older, Bonpa, is said to have its origin in prehistoric times, but the native records mention that Bonpa received a regular shape and order in the third century BC coincident with the arrival in the country of three Bon priests — from Kashmir, Dusha, and Shagshung. Coming to the historical times, it is found that the Bon *sutras* and rituals were put down in regular books by a pandit from Kashmir. The Bon religion thereafter grew in importance and there was an incessant flow of Kashmirian teachers to that land. For instance, it is learnt from Chinese sources that there was a Kashmiri named Sakya Shribhadra who went to Tibet in 405 AD and taught people there. He was an expert in logic. He also knew the Tibetan language and wrote seven books on Buddhism in Sanskrit and translated several of them into Tibetan. Another Kashmiri, Ratnavjera went to Bodh Gaya and was in charge of one of the departments of Vikramasila university and subsequently he went to Udyana (Swat) and thence to Tibet. He wrote 14 books on Buddhism.[61]

The greatest figure, however, who is responsible for the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet and the formation of Tibetan script and grammar is the great Shyama Bhatta, known in Tibet as Thumi Sambhota and worshipped as an incarnation of Manjusri.[62] He rose to be the minister of the great Tibetan king Srang Tsan gampo who was born a little after

60. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, Trs. by Sir Henry Yule.
61. Pandit Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p. 29
62. Ibid., p. 30.

600 AD. He was the founder of Lhasa, the present capital of Tibet, and in 632 he formally asked Sambhota to preach to his people. Sambhota later paid a visit to Kashmir in search of sacred books and Kashmirian scholars and when he again settled in Tibet, he with his Kashmirian collaborators translated several Sanskrit treatises into Tibetan. The Tibetan had hitherto been an oral language only but in order that the sacred books might be translated, a written character was invented by Sambhota. This was based on the Sanskrit alphabet as then used in Kashmir. The most famous of all works ascribed to him is the *Mani Kambum*, "The Myriad of Precious Words"— a treatise chiefly on religion but which also contained an account of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. He is also the author of the standard work on Tibetan Buddhism, the Samatog, on which the civil laws of Tibet are formed.

Thumi Sambhota exercised an enormous influence over King Srang Tsan Gampo and his two queens. They became devout followers of the new faith and carried on the mission to the farthest corners of Tibet. The two queens are till today worshipped under the name of Dara-eke, "The Golden Mothers", being regarded as incarnations of Durga and Parvati. The King has also become a saint being looked upon as an incarnation of Avlokiteswar.

Among the monks who came to Tibet during Srang Tsan Gampo's reign were Tabuta and Ganuta from Kashmir.[63]

There were numerous Kashmiri monks and scholars active in Tibet for many centuries more. In 750 AD for instance, a Kashmiri monk named Vairocana was among the best known translators of Sanskrit books into Tibetan. His usefulness, however, was interrupted for a while by the Tibetan wife of the then king, Thi Srong Detsan, who, in her bitter opposition to king's reforms and instigated by the Bonpa priests, secured the banishment of Vairocana to the eastern province of Khambay, a scheme similar to that practised by Potiphar's wife. But on her forthwith being afflicted with leprosy, she repented, and the young Vairocana was recalled and effected her cure. She is still however handed down to history as the "Red Rahula She-Devil" while Vairocana is made an incarnation of Buddha's faithful attendant and cousin Ananda.[64]

The zealous King Thi Srong Detsan founded monasteries freely and initiated a period of great literary activity by procuring many talented Indian scholars for the work of translating the Sanskrit canonical works

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63. Z.A. Waddel, *Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 30.
64. Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism.*

and commentaries into Tibetan. The Kashmiri monks Jinamitra, Danasila and Ananda were the best known of these workers.

The Augustus of Tibet was Ralpachan, who ruled in the ninth century AD. He summoned from Kashmir many celebrated doctors who with the help of native assistants took seriously in hand the business of rendering the canon in Tibetan. They revised the existing translations and added many more of their own. The most prolific of Ralpachan's translators was Jinamitra, a pandit of Kashmir described as belonging to the Vaibhasikia school who translated a large part of Vinaya and many other *sutras*. Numerous works are also ascribed to Sarvajnanadeva and Dharmaka, both of Kashmir.[65]

After the death of King Ralpachan there broke out a calculated and barbarous campaign against the Buddhists under King Lang Dharma. He was succeeded by King Yeshe-o, who seeing that this religion was about to die in Tibet, tried his best to revive it. He selected a batch of 21 promising and intelligent Tibetan youth and after giving them a preliminary training, sent them to Kashmir to study under Pandit Ratnavjira — the great Buddhist teacher. But to the great grief of the king only two of them — Ratnabhadra and Supragya returned alive, the rest perishing on the high passes. He, therefore, thought it best to invite Buddhist monks to Tibet and in response to his invitation Somnath Kashmiri and Shribhadra together with numerous other Kashmiri pandits went to Tibet to put in a new life into the dying religion.[66]

At the beginning of the 11th century also many foreign monks arrived from various countries. The Tibetan chroniclers say that the chief workers in the new diffusion were La-chen and Lo-chen. Lo-chen was a Kashmiri and several other Kashmirian Lamas are mentioned as working in Tibet.[67]

It is not surprising therefore that Marco Polo who visited China during the reign of Kublai Khan learnt from the Mongols and Lamas with whom he came in contact that they regarded Kashmir as the "very original source from which the religion had spread abroad." The feeling with which they looked to Kashmir must have been nearly the same as that with which the Buddhists of Burma look to Ceylon.[68]

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65. Ibid.
66. Rahul Sankrityayana: *Travels in Ladakh and Tibet (Hindi)*.
67. *Pag San Jan Zang*, edited by S.C. Das, p. 183.
68. The *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, Trs. by Sir H. Yule, n-3, pp. 168-69.

Chinese Pilgrims in Kashmir

Whereas Kashmiri monks, missionaries, writers and scholars were busy in propagating the religion and culture of India in the Chinese Empire, there was an unending stream of pilgrims and students coming from that country to the holy shrines of India and the seats of Indian learning. Kashmir which abounded in both and which stood astride the overland route to India, was thus the special object of these visits. The knowledge the pilgrims and students from China gained in the Valley was later diffused by them in their own country. Conversely, they were responsible for influencing the art and culture of Kashmir by that of their own country.

The records of these travellers not only throw a considerable light on the political, geographical and economic condition of Kashmir during their times but also give a vivid picture of many famous men of letters and their writings.

That the Chinese and Tibetan Bhiksus and pilgrims used to visit Kashmir in very great numbers is strikingly proved by an interesting verse in the *Rajatarangini*. Describing the reign of Meghavahana and the religious foundations of his queen Amritaprabha, Kalhana says:

> His queen Amritaprabha caused a vihara called Amritabhavana to be constructed for the benefit of foreign Bhiksus.
>
> The spiritual guide *(guru)* of her father, who had come from a foreign country called Loh and who in the language of that country was designated *stonpa* built the stupa called Lohstonpa.

The Amritabhavana vihara has been identified by Stein at the Vantabhawan locality of Srinagar. This vihara was in a flourishing state during Ou-kong's visit (759 AD) who mentions it as the "Monastery of Ngo-mi-t'o-po-wan" (transcribed as Amitabhavan). Vantabhawan is a suberb of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir and is the terminus of the Leh-Srinagar route.

Fa-Hien visited India in 399 AD and although he personally did not pay a visit to the Valley proper, he nearly touched its frontiers. He visited Gilgit and Ladakh coming through the country of Eastern Turkistan. He mentions that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in the country and the Indian sacred literature was widely diffused in Central Asia. He had a Kashmiri collaborator with him named Buddhajiva who accompanied him to China.

Soon after Fa-Hien, another Chinese monk, Che-mong, started from Ch'ang-nagn in 404 AD for a journey to India. He was accompanied by 14 other monks and took a Kashmiri monk as a guide. After a strenuous journey over Central Asia they reached the Pamirs, which Che-mong crossed with only six companions, the rest finding it too difficult for them to continue the journey. The Kashmiri guide also lost his life while crossing the passes. Che-mong and his companions stayed on in Kashmir for a pretty long time after which they started on a pilgrimage to holy Buddhist shrines in India. He returned to China in 424 AD taking the same route by which he had come.

Another Chinese monk, Fa-yong, started for India in 420 AD accompanied by a party of 20 monks. He came via Turfan, Kucha, Kashghar and then over the Pamirs and along the Gilgit valley reached Kashmir. Fa-yong and his companions passed more than a year in the Valley to study the Sanskrit language and the Buddhist lore. He then returned to China by sea visiting all the holy places in India on his way home.

Heun Tsiang universally respected in China as the Great Master of the Law, came in search of further knowledge to India in 631 AD. Travelling by the usual Central Asian route he entered Kashmir from Urusha (Hazara) in the west and passed two years (May 631 to April 633) in the Valley, stuuying the *sutras* and *sastras*. He was received with great pomp and show by the then king of Kashmir who sent his nephew to escort him from his first resting place in the Valley near Baramula to the palace in Srinagar. When Heun Tsiang approached the capital, the king of Kashmir, with his whole court came out in person to meet him.

> The road was covered with parasols and standards, and the whole route was strewn with flowers. Then he begged him to mount a large elephant and walked in his train.

The next day, after a feast in the palace, the king invited Heun Tsiang to begin courses on the difficult points in the doctrine.

> After hearning that the love of learning had brought him from distant lands and that when he desired to read he found himself without texts, he put twenty scribes at his disposal to obtain for him copies of the Buddhist gospel as well as of later philosophic treatises.

In Kashmir he found numerous religious institutions with more than 5,000 monks residing in them. There was one temple containing the holy tooth relic of Buddha. Another *matha* was famous as the seat of the great master of *sastras*, Sanghabhadra. There was another neighbouring monastery famous for its presiding sage Skandhila. He also noted two other

monasteries as the abode of the two great masters Purna and Bodhila. His biographer tells that the pilgrim found in Kashmir a master aged 70 after his own heart, a learned Mahayanist doctor with whom he studied the works of Nagarjuna.

> This master of outstanding virtue observed the rules of discipline with a rigorous purism. He was gifted with a profound intellect and his vast learning embraced every branch of knowledge. His talents and his enlightenment partook of the divine and his benevolent heart was full of affection for the sages and of respect for the lettered. Heun Tsiang questioned him without reserve and gave himself up, night and day, to study with him with untiring zeal.

He himself has left us a very picturesque description of this 'aerial paradise'.

"The country," he says, "has a circumference of seven hundred leagues, and its four frontiers have a background of mountains of prodigious height. It is reached by very narrow passes. That is why none of the neighbouring princes has been able to attack it successfully. On the western side, the capital adjoins a large river. The country is suitable for the cultivation of grain and produces a great abundance of flowers. The climate is cold and glacial; much snow falls but there is little wind. The inhabitants are goodlooking but they are crafty, light and frivolous, and of a weak pusillanimous disposition. They wear woollen caps and white cotton clothes."

During his time the sway of the Kashmir king extended to Taxila.[69]

When he returned to China after performing the pilgrimage to various Buddhist centres and holy places in India, Heun Tsiang was given a fitting reception by his own king and he became the centre of great religious and literary activity where seekers after truth and knowledge came from far and near, who in turn diffused this knowledge particularly in Korea and Japan.

After Heun Tsiang there are the accounts of another Chinese traveller, Ou-kong known also as Dharmadhatu. He came to Ki-pin in 759 AD through the Kabul valley and Gandhara. He lived in Kashmir for four years and there he took the final vows of a Buddhist monk. He studied Sanskrit and learnt Vinaya in seven sections from three teachers. In the convent of Mong-te or Mundi-vihara, he learnt the *Silas* and studied the

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69. For a detailed account of Heun Tsiang's travels, see *Life of Heun Tsiang* translated by Beal; Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels,* and Rene Grousset, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha.*

Vinaya of the Mulasarvastivadins. He refers to the following seven of the Buddhist establishments besides the Mong-te vihara: (1) Amitabhavana, (2) Ananga or Anandbhavana, (3) Ki-tche, (4) Nao-yi-le, (5) Jo-jo (6) Ye-li-t'e-lo, (7) K'o-toon.

He noticed more than 300 monasteries in the kingdom and a large number of stupas and images. After four years of study he went to Gandhara and resided in the monastery of Jou-lo-li — a monastery carrying the name of the king, its founder, belonging to the line of Kaniska.[70]

Since Heun Tsiang mentions only about 100 convents existing in his time in Kashmir, it can be concluded that there had been a rise in the popularity of Buddhism during the intervening period of a little more than one hundred years. Ou-kong also makes mention of the Zojila route as the highway leading to T'ou-fan or Tibet and of the Po-liu representing the present Gilgit road.

Graeco-Buddhist Art

Kashmir though not remaining directly under the sway of the Indo-Grecian empire for long, was yet profoundly affected by the Greek artistic influence. From bygone ages, the inhabitants of the Happy Valley have been known throughout the world as accomplished artisans, possessing an artistic bent of mind, influenced to a very great extent by their beautiful natural surroundings. Even their indigenous philosophy — the Kashmir Saivism — has raised art to the highest pinnacle as according to Abhinavagupta to kneed nature into a work of art is the nearest approximation to the knowledge of godhead.

Kashmiris have been known to outsiders as *Shastra Shilpina* or architects on account of their well-known skill in building. Similarly, in the realm of sculpture they, like the Greeks, personified the natural objects and imparted to them life and vividness as beheld and experienced by them in their heavenly homeland. Religious fervour of these early artists found outward expression in the building of temples and ikonographs. The Cosmic Force, the animating principle of Indian Pantheism was worshiped, as noted above, under the name of Siva. He inspired the artist-sculptor of Kashmir. Siva as Terrible — Bhairava, Siva as Saviour and above all Siva as the Ardhanareswar united with his consort, Parvati, the Maid of the Mountains. Mr Grousset observes:

There is a profound symbolism in this whose philosophic import we

70. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, I — Pp. 258-59.

should be careful not to misinterpret, for it shows us the god of destruction as one and the same with the creative principle, the act of death as the source of generative power.

This unique development in the Kashmir sculpture was carried to Central Asia, Tibet and China where under the influence of Buddhism, Avlokiteswar, the Adhi Buddha and the numerous Dhyani Buddhas are represented as both destructive power as well as creative energy. Right from the farthest corners of Central Asia to Japan and the uplands of Tibet, the influence of this art is apparent even to this day.

China has been deeply affected by the introduction of the Graeco-Buddhist art which followed in the wake of missionaries from Kashmir and the rest of India to that country. That the home of this school of art was Gandhara has now been established. The part which the Kashmiri artists played in the development of the Gandharan art has not been fully brought out by the authorities on the subject, presumably due to the paucity of archaeological data in the Valley. But the recent discoveries of terracotta tiles at Harvan and fragments of statuary at Ushkur, fill to a great extent this lacuna. All the same the close political and cultural ties existing between Kashmir and Gandhara in ancient times is proof positive of the fact that the Kashmiri artists must have been responsible to a great extent for the development of this famous school of ancient Graeco-Buddhist art. It will not, therefore, be out of place to deal with this important aspect in a more detailed manner.

The break-up of the Empire of Asoka had the usual repercussions on the north-western province of India. The control of the central authority being weakened, renewed incursions into the Punjab by northern people took place. This time, the invaders were far advanced in civilization. The Greeks had set up an independent kingdom in Bactria and they crossed the Indian frontier and occupied Gandhara. As time went on, these Bactrian Greeks born in India were actually received into the fold of the Hindu religion. This fusion of the two people produced a remarkable synthesis of the Indo-Greek civilizations giving birth to the famous Gandhara school of art.[71]

With the movement of the Kusan horde, however, Gandhara came under their sway when Kadphises II overthrew the last Greek monarch, Hermaeus. The Kusans gradually reduced to subjection the various petty Greek, Parthean and Saka kingdoms and built up an extensive empire under Kaniska. The important role that Kashmir played politically and

71. Rawlinson, *India —A Short Cultural History.*

culturally under Kaniska has already been dealt with. The Hellinised art of Gandhara appealed to the Kusans and under Kaniska it flourished, travelling to far off places in India and Central Asia.

Long before the Greeks penetrated to this region, Gandhara had close political relations with the kingdom of Kashmir. Kalhana lays the first scenes of his immortal *Rajatarangini* there. Subsequently, we find frequent references to Gandhara and its Brahmins.[72] It is recorded that Mihirakula the Epthalite Hun king of Kashmir settled thousands of Gandharan Brahmins in Kashmir. He also tells us that the young warriors of Gandhara were in great demand for the army of Kashmir.[73]

> The abundance in which the coins of Indo-Greek, Parthean and Saka kings of north-western India were found till recently in Kashmir points to the existence of considerable commercial inter-course, if not actual political connection, between the Valley and the principalities of Peshawar and Kabul in the last two centuries BC and the first century AD[74]

The earliest propagation of Buddhist religion in Kashmir and Gandhara is attributed to the same person — Majjhántika, the great missionary sent by Moggaliputta Tissa, the religious adviser of Asoka. The kingdom of Kashmir appears in ancient records as a part and parcel of Gandhara. In the list of 16 Mahajanapadas, the Buddhist texts mention Kashmira-Gandhara as one Janapada, indicating thereby that the two countries formed one political unit in the pre-Asoka period. During Asoka's reign Kashmir and Gandhara came close together. Even after the break-up of his vast empire, the connections were maintained, alternately Gandhara becoming the vassal of Kashmir and the Punjab. King Meghavahana of Kashmir was brought from Gandhara by the nobility of Kashmir to rule over the land after the retirement of Samdhimat-Aryaraja.[75] That Kashmir and Gandhara continued to remain one political unit after Asoka is evidenced by the Greek records in which Kaspapyros is described as a Gandharan city. In the *Milindapanha* which was composed about the beginning of the Christian era, the two countries are compounded as Kashmira-Gandhara. There can also be no doubt that Kalhana's references to the expeditions of Kashmiri kings into the north-west frontier of India are historical facts. Heun Tsiang, when visited

72. *Rajatarangini*, i — 66, 68, 307; ii — 145.
73. R.C. Pandit, *River of Kings*, p. 615.
74. R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*, p. 52.
75. *See Raj*, iii — 2. Like Meghavahana, Udhyana Deva, who was a refugee in Gandhara, was restored to the throne of Kashmir in the 14th century.

Taxila, found the country to be a dependency of Kashmir.

The close connections of the various Kashmiri kings with the Sahi rulers of the Kabul valley whose capital was at Udbhandapura (modern Und) is amply proved from a study of the *Rajatarangini*. Lalitaditya gave shelter to many young princes of the later Kusan rulers of the Kabul valley and appointed them to high posts under him. In the later history of Kashmir we learn that the Kashmiri kings entered into matrimonial relations with the Sahi kings of Gandhara. Under Anantdeva (1028-63 AD) we find several scions of that house, designated as Sahiputras or Rajaputras, in positions of great honour and power at the Kashmir court.[76] The last independent ruler of this line at Gandhara, Trilochanpala, was aided by the then king of Kashmir, Samgramaraja (1006-28AD) but received a crushing defeat at the hands of Mahmud Ghazni and spent the rest of his days as a refugee in Kashmir. In the 14th century Sultan Sikandar of Kashmir conquered Gandhara and married the princess of Udbhandapura whose son the celebrated Zain-ul-abidin was the Akbar of Kashmir.

With such close political and cultural ties existing between the two kingdoms of Kashmir and Gandhara, it is unimaginable that the Gandharan school of art could have developed independent of the skilled hands of the Kashmirian artists. For thousands of years past, Kashmirian artisans have been famous for the exquisite products of their artistic hands and even now their fame in this respect throughout Asia and Europe has not in any way diminished. If the Greek influences are unmistakably found in the ruins of old temples in Kashmir, the converse must also be true and the art of Gandhara must have been affected by the skill of the Kashmiri sculptor and architect. We find that excepting the unavoidable difference in the material used for the various buildings in Kashmir and Gandhara, the two are architecturally identical. The early Buddhist edifices of Kashmir have practically the same plan and probably had the same elevations as the contemporary Buddhist buildings of Gandhara.[77] As Dr P. C. Begchi in his *India and China* observes:

> We have seen, that during the first period of Buddhist expansion outside India, it was the North-West, specially Gandhara and Kashmir which took the leading part. It is, therefore, quite natural that the missionaries of these two countries who went to Central Asia and

76. Compare *Rajatarangini*, vii — 144, 178, 274. Among the wives of King Harsa there were Vasantalekha and other Sahi princesses. vii — 956, 1470.
77. R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*.

China would carry with them the elements of the Indo-Greek art which was, in their own country, the only medium of the plastic expression of their pious aspirations.[78]

Mahayana Buddhism was responsible for the development of the Graeco-Buddhist art which found enthusiastic reception at the hands of the Chinese. Numerous Buddhist gods and goddesses — Avlokiteswar, Tara, Manjusri, Kwan-Yen, Maitreya — afforded a vast field for the talented sculptors of Kashmir and Gandhara. It profoundly reacted on the plastic art of not only Central Asia and China but on that of distant Japan too.

Kaniska's Successors

It is probable that Vasiska and Huviska who were the sons of Kaniska acted as Viceroys in succession but it appears that Vasiska predeceased his father who was succeeded by Huviska in 140 AD.

Huviska was succeeded by Vasudeva, also called Juska. He died about 178 AD when the Kusan rule came to an end in Kashmir. The dynasty, however, continued to rule in Kabul and the Punjab till they were swept away by Hun invasions in the fifth century AD.

Buddhism, it seems, suffered a reverse in Kashmir after the reign of Kaniska and his immediate successors. The progress of its decline is significantly brought out by Kalhana who mentions that the Buddhists who gained a great preponderance under the benevolent care of Nagarjuna were responsible for the destruction of the traditional customs and rites of the land. This evoked the wrath of the Nagas, the tutelary deities of the Valley, who revenged themselves by causing excessive snowfall which destroyed the 'Bauddhas' and obliged the king to leave the Valley during the cold season for the lower hill tracts south of Kashmir.

Finally, according to Kalhana, a pious Brahmin, through the help of Nila Naga, the lord of Kashmir Nagas, restored the traditional cult through rites and rituals as prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana* and thereby freed the land from excessive snowfall and 'the plague of the Bhiksus'.

A repetition of this legend during the reign of Abhimanyu I, who succeeded Vasudeva alias Juska, is interesting as showing a distinctly anti-Buddhist drive in progress during his reign. Says Kalhana:

At the time there manifested itself some miraculous power through

78. P.C. Bagchi, *India and China.*

which the Brahmins, who offered oblations and sacrifices, escaped destruction, while the Bauddhas perished.[79]

The traditional Brahminic learning was also revived in the reign of this king, for Kalhana definitely mentions that under his instructions one Chandracarya and others "brought the *Mahabhasya,* which was at that time difficult of access (for study), into general use." Similarly the king is credited with having founded a town named Abhimanyapur (modern Bemyun near Srinagar) in which he set up a temple dedicated to the worship of Siva.

This drive against Buddhism was continued during the reign of his successor Gonanda III, who finally assured the restoration of the traditional worship of the earlier cult. Gonanda III, who ruled for 35 years, was the founder of a dynasty bearing his name. His successors, Vibhisna I, Indrajit, Ravana, and Vibhisna II, are briefly mentioned as founders of a few towns and dedicators of temples.

Naga Tribe

The account given of Nara or Kimnara, the next ruler, seems more substantial. In reality, however, it consists only of an elaborated legend relating to an ancient town near Vijayeswara which local traditions surviving partly to the present day, attributed to king Nara, and which was believed to have been destroyed in a great catastrophe brought about through the king's wickedness. Kalhana's mention of ruins and the actual finds of ancient coins in the locality are indications that there once stood an old town on the banks of the Vitasta below the plateau of Chakradhara, near the modern town of Bijbihara.

According to this legend King Nara, who was in the beginning of his reign a good and just king, developed towards the end Nero-like propensities. He founded a beautiful town which "was a synonym for paradise." In one of the cool ponds in the main park of the city dwelt Naga Susravas and his two beautiful daughters.

It happened that one day a poor Brahmin, Vaisakha by name came to take rest in a grove near this pond. While he was about to have some refreshments, two beautiful girls came up from the spring and apparently taking no heed of him began to hungrily eat pods of *kachidani* grass which grew in abundance there.

79. *Rajatarangini,* i — 181.

This amazed the Brahmin, who taking up courage inquired of them the reason for their poverty. The girls related him their sad story.

They were the daughters of Naga Susravas and even though they were entitled to a share of the rich crops growing around Kimnarapura, they could not touch it until the field-guard partook of the new harvest. But as ill luck would have it, he had taken a vow not to eat a single grain of fresh crops; hence their miserable condition.

The Brahmin boy was moved to pity. One day he stealthily put some fresh corn into the vessel in which the field-guard was cooking his food. No sooner did he partake of it than the Naga carried off, through thunder and storm, the rich harvest all around the city. The Naga was naturally grateful to the Brahmin and granted him his request to marry one of his daughters.

While the happy couple were leading a peaceful life in the city, King Nara heard of the beauty of the Brahmin's wife and tried to seduce her through his emissaries. Having failed in these attempts he decided to carry her off by force. Vaisakha and his wife thereupon ran for their lives and jumped into the pond inhabited by Naga Susravas.

The Naga was infuriated. He cast thunder clouds in the sky. There was a heavy downpour and the beautiful city of Kimnarapura was destroyed together with its people. the Naga and his daughter and son-in-law then left the ruined city and created for their residence a lake of "dazzling whiteness resembling a sea of milk", which to this day is known as Sesnag.

Legends like these and worship of Nagas (snakes) and springs associated with Nagas among several tribes and communities have aroused the interest of several scholars to a closer and more intensive study of their origin and extent. The historical background of Nagas has thus become an object of research. The great importance of the Nagas both in Buddhist and Brahmanical lore is reflected in plastic and pictorial art. Among the frescoes of Ajanta there are several representations of the Nagas.

According to James Fergusson, the Nagas were not originally serpents but serpent worshippers — an aboriginal race of the Turanian stock inhabiting Northern India, who were conquered by the Aryans. Dr C.F. Oldham is of the opinion that the Nagas claimed descent from the Sun and had the hooded serpent for a totem. Taksacila (Taxila), he says, was their chief city.

K.R. Subramanian in his *Origin of Shaivism* mentions that the

Naga is mixed with the cult of Saivism, and it is claimed that south Indian Saivism migrated to Northern India, leaving in the South its remnants in the Nagaras, or Nayars. The tribes of Nagas had powerful kingdoms in different parts of India.

We cannot but deduce from the stories of the Nagas, as mentioned at different places in the *Rajatarangini*, that for a very long time there raged a long and bitter struggle between them and the new settlers in Kashmir. Ultimately there seems to have been a preponderance of the Aryan immigrants who, as in other parts of India, absorbed the original inhabitants.

Nara was succeeded by his son Sidha who had escaped the terrible fate of his father as he had been away from the city on its day of destruction. He is described as a very pious prince and credited with a bodily ascent to heaven. Of Utpalaksa, Hiranyaksa, Hiranyakula and Vasukula, the next four kings who are supposed to have ruled in succession from father to son, there are only the names and lengths of their reigns. Hiranyaksa appears to have traditionally figured as the founder of Hiranyapura, now a small place at the entrance of the Sindh valley.

Mihirakula and Later Huns

We reach again a record of truly historical interest in Kalhana's account of Mihirakula, the son and successor of Vasukula. The identity of Mihirakula with the Ephthalite or White Hun ruler of that name must be regarded as certain. From the epigraphical and other evidence it is seen that Mihirakula had succeeded, about 515 AD to his father Toramana as ruler of the wide dominion which earlier White Hun conquests had established between the Kabul Valley and Central India.

The Hiung-nu or the Hunas of Sanskrit literature first came to view about 165 BC when they defeated the Yu-echi and compelled them to quit their lands in north-western China. In course of time the Huns also moved westwards, one branch proceeding towards the Oxus valley and the other section reaching Europe where they earned undying notoriety for their savage cruelties. From the Oxus the Huns turned towards the south about the second decade of the fifth century AD and crossing Afghanistan and north-western passes, eventually entered India. They attacked the western parts of the Gupta dominions but were hurled back by the military strength of Skandagupta. Later the Hun hordes poured into India again

after 484 AD and under their leader Toramana were mainly responsible for the downfall of the Gupta Empire.

Mihirakula, according to Kalhana's account and as represented in Indian tradition, was a cruel tyrant, taking fiendish delight in acts of brutality. Heun Tsiang mentions this king with his capital at Sakala (Sialkot in Pakistan) as the persecutor of the peaceful Buddhists and a merciless destroyer and plunderer of their stupas and monasteries.

Mihirakula was not, however, destined to enjoy his power for long. He suffered defeat and discomfiture at the hands of two different kings, which not only put an end to his power but also to the Hun menace in the rest of India.[80] The first was Yasodharman of Malwa who routed his forces and broke his power. The second was Baladitya, the ruler of Magadha, who defeated and captured Mihirakula. After securing his release through the intercession of the queen mother, Mihirakula sought safety in Kashmir, posing as an ardent supporter of Saivas. The refugee, however, misused the kindness shown to him, and by his machinations soon seized the throne of Kashmir.

Kalhana recounting his earlier exploits mentions his campaign in South India, where he had defeated the king of Ceylon and had subjugated the territories of the chiefs of Tanjore, Karnatac, and Central Gujarat.

Kalhana represents him as a cruel king whose "approach became known by the sight of vultures, crows and the like, eager to feed on those being massacred by his encircling army."[81] Mihirakula had arrived at that stage of human depravity when cruelty becomes pleasing for its own sake. While crossing the Pir Panjal pass, an elephant missed his foot and tumbled down a precipice. Its shrieks and yells while rolling down pleased the ears of this mad king and he ordered 100 more elephants to be pushed down the precipice, just to amuse himself. The place is since called Hastivanj (Sans. *hasti* — elephant, *vanjana* — destroyer).

Kalhana mentions another tradition about Mihirakula's cruelty. While diverting a canal, a large boulder stood in its way which could not be removed. The king announced that according to a dream which he had had that night, the boulder was the abode of a Yaksani, and it could be moved only by the touch of a chaste woman. All women of high families in the neighbourhood were ordered to touch the boulder which of course could not move. It was then given out that a potter's wife, Chandravati,

80. R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, pp. 254-55.
81. *Rajatararngini*, i-291.

by her mere touch had flung the boulder away to one side. This gave the pitiless king an excuse to order massacre of thousands of helpless women, their husbands, brothers and children. "Felony", declares Kalhana in anger, "is the slaughter of living beings on a large scale, even though for a cause."

According to Kalhana there were some historians who excused his cruelties and referred to a tradition that after killing the people of Aryadesha, Mihirakula performed austere penances and earned merit by re-introducing pious observances in Kashmir which had suffered owing to the irruption of impure Dards, Bhauttas and Mlechhas. The legend and emblems of Mihirakula's coins display an unmistakable leaning towards the Saiva cult, and thus seem to justify to some extent the above observations.

He is creditied with building a shrine of Siva near Srinagar and founding a town in Holada (Vular Pargana) calling it after his own name Mihirapur. He also bestowed 1,000 *agraharas* or land grants at Vijayeswara to lower class Brahmins of Gandhara, the Brahmins of Kashmir refusing to accept them from the hands of a cruel king.

Afflicted with an exacerbating malady, Mihirakula ended his life by committing suicide. He cast himself as a libation on to a huge sacrificial fire which he had lighted himself. A voice is said to have been heard saying that he had attained salvation, since he had shown no mercy even to himself. Whether he got salvation or not, the country at any rate got deliverance from the fiendish acts of this cruel king.

After Mihirakula's death, it is likely that he was followed by other Hun rulers. Though the *Rajatarangini* does not specifically mention it, some of the names recorded in it disclosed their Hun identity. Their peculiar names and the fact that most of them were ardent Saivas, show that they continued the patronage of Brahmins and succeeded to a great extent in reducing the power and influence of the Buddhists.

Baka, the son and successor of Mihirakula, is painted by Kalhana as a virtuous prince and a great contrast to his father. He founded a Siva temple called Bakesa and built a canal. A tradition remembered as late as Kalhana's own time, attributes the death of the king to the witchcraft of a sorceress.

The next four kings, Ksitinanda, Vasunanda, Nara II, and Aksa are each disposed of with a single line, and accordingly can claim only a very shadowy existence as historical personages. All the information vouchsafed about them is that Vasunanda composed a treatise on

erotics, and Aksa founded the town of Aksvala, the modern Achabal where at the foot of the famous spring lies the beautiful garden laid out by Jahangir.

Gopaditya, the next king has a greater claim to historical reality. He is credited with the building of the temple named Jyesteswara on the Gopa hill.[82] He donated land to Brahmins from Aryadesha near its vicinity.[83] He stopped the slaughter of animals 'save for sacrifices'.

Of Gokarna, the successor of Gopaditya, Kalhana has nothing to say except that he built a temple of Gokarnesa.

We must, however, recognise Khinkhila, also called Narendraditya, whom Kalhana names Gokarna's son, as the Hun ruler who calls himself Deva Sahi Khingila on his coins. He consecrated shrines to Buteswara and his spiritual guru Ugra, built a temple named Ugresa, as well as a shrine dedicated to *matricakras* or mystic symbols.

After Khinkhila, his son, Yudhisthira I, ascended the throne. He had small eyes and was, therefore, nicknamed *andha* or blind. In the beginning of his rule he was just and benevolent, but later falling a prey to pernicious influences of wicked companions, gave himself up to a course of base indulgences and debauchery. He despised the learned and his vices and crimes were numerous. As was expected, the people and the soldiery detested him and the vassal chiefs of bordering territories became rebellious. Coming to know that the nobles of the kingdom were about to dethrone him, the king stealthily fled together with his wives across the passes to the Punjab. After some time he tried to regain his throne, but was defeated and captured, and ended his days in a prison at Durgagalika, present Drugjan at the western foot of Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar.

The six kings whose reigns are chronicled in the Second Book of the *Rajatarangini* are of different lines of descent. After Yudhisthira's dethronement, the nobles of Kashmir invited from India a relative of King Vikramaditya and crowned him as King of Kashmir under the name of Pratapaditya I. Due to internal dissensions, the kingdom, according to Kalhana, came for some time under the rule of "Harsa

82. The Gopa hill is now called Sankaracarya in Srinagar. The old name survives in the village of Gopkar situated at the foot of the hill. The ancient temple on the hill which stands to this day perhaps dates from this period, and formed part of the original temple of Jyesteswara.

83. Aryadesha is the land of the Aryas, and refers to the Indo-Gangetic plain. This is an illustration of immigration by royal invitation of Brahmins from other parts of India.

and other foreign kings." Pratapaditya is said to have ruled the people as lovingly as any son of the soil would.

Kalhana rejects the opinion of some earlier chroniclers who held this Vikramaditya to be identical with Vikramaditya Sakari, the traditional vanquisher of the Sakas.[84] But he does not supply a clue that might help us to ascertain which of the several Vikramadityas was really meant. As Kalhana in the same connection mentions that Kashmir came under the rule of Harsa, we might infer that the great Harsa Vikramaditya of Ujjain who ruled in the first half of the sixth century AD, was intended. Yet Kalhana's subsequent accounts refers to this ruler as the patron of Matrigupta. It is clear that there is some error in Kalhana's chronology. This is perhaps due to confusion caused by earlier Chroniclers who were unable to connect the local rulers with kings who ruled Kashmir from far-off centres in the rest of India through viceroys or governors. We have here a clear indication of Kashmir under the rule of Indian kings such as we must assume it to have been during more than one period preceding the commencement of authentic history in Kalhana's record.

Of Pratapaditya I and his son and successor, Jalauka's, Kalhana has otherwise nothing to say except that they ruled justly and exactly for 32 years each. Tunjina who came next had a saintly wife named Vakpusta. Both the king and the queen founded several temples and towns and were great patrons of learning and fine arts. In his time flourished the great poet Chandaka. Dramatic performances were frequently held at the court.

Kalhana gives a graphic account of the terrible famine which took a heavy toll of life in Kashmir during Tunjina's rule. When the fields were full with ripening rice crop, an untimely snowfall in the month of Bhadun (September) completely destroyed it, resulting in a devastating famine when, in the words of the poet-historian, "the love of wife, affection for the son, loving kindness of the parent, tormented by hunger, in the anxiety of a belly-ful, were forgotten by everyone."

Vakpusta founded the town of Katimusa and Ramusa[85] and having no son of her own performed *sati* on the death of her husband. The place where the king and the queen were cremated was till Kalhana's

84. *Rajatarangini*, ii — 6,

85. Katimusa, modern Kaimuh, is a considerable village on the left bank of the Veshau — tributary of the Jhelum, 75°9' long. 33°43' lat. Ramusa, or the present Romush is situated on the high road from Srinagar to "Shopyan, 74°54' long. 33°42' lat."

time and even later known as Vakpustatavi. A religious endowment created there by the charitable queen before her death "distributed food to multitudes of indigent people even at the present day" — records the chronicler.

Of the next king Vijaya Kalhana contents himself with recording that he belonged to another family, and that the foundation of a town surrounding the ancient shrine of Vijayeswara was due to him.

His son, Jayendra, who ascended the throne after him was without a son and at his death the throne remained vacant for some time.

A fanciful legend spun out in great detail about the miraculous restoration to life of Samdhimat, the pious minister, whom Jayendra had cruelly put to death, is the main theme of the account given of this king. The saintly hero of the tale is then supposed to have ascended the Kashmir throne vacated by Jayendra's death under the title of Aryaraja. He seems to be considered in the Kashmir traditions as an ideal saintly king who built shrines and whose memory till Kalhana's time was preserved in several religious endowments. Samdhimat-Aryaraja voluntarily abdicated and ended his days as a recluse at the sacred site of Siva Bhutesa.

Aryaraja's abdication which closes the Second Book of the Chronicle, was followed according to Kalhana by a restoration of Gonanda's family to the rule of Kashmir. Meghavahana, the first prince of the restored dynasty, is said to have been the son of Gopaditya, a great-grandson of Yudhisthira, living in exile at the court of the king of Gandhara.

In his youth Meghavahana had attended the *Svayamvara* of the daughter of the king of Assam and had been chosen by the bride, Amritaprabha to be her husband. His versatile genius and his calm and dignified personality eminently fitted him to discharge the duties of a king. No wonder that several myths and stories grew round his name, some of which have been reproduced by Kalhana.

There is, however, no doubt to his being influenced in his early youth by Buddhism, Gandhara being still a Buddhist stronghold. This explains his zeal in prohibiting the slaughter of animals not only in his own realm but all over India. The stories about his military expeditions to as far off places as South India and Ceylon, in order to enforce his decree, and other miraculous stories of his saving animals and human beings from sacrifice at religious places by ignorant and fanatical worshippers, only illustrate his staunch belief in the doctrine of *ahimsa* as preached by the Buddha. That popular belief in Kashmir gave them full credence

is shown by the fact that certain royal banners, used still in Kalhana's time, were supposed to have been presented to Meghavahana during his expeditions by the king of Ceylon.

Meghavahana founded the town of Meghavana and also the vihara or monastery of Meghanatha. His queen Amritaprabha built a monastery named Amritbhavan[86] for the accommodation of foreign Bhiksus. This vihara was known to Ou-kong. Her father's guru who had come from Loh (Leh?) and who was designated as stonpa, constructed a stupa which came to be known as Lostunpa. Several more stupas and viharas were founded by his other queens Yukadevi, Indradevi, Khadana and Samma. All these endowments seem to rest on genuine tradition.

Meghavahana's son and successor, Sresthasena who is said to have borne also the names of Pravarasena, and Tunjana, built various sacred structures at Puranadisthana, the city founded originally by Asoka the site of which is now marked by Pandrenthan.

Sresthasena had two sons, of whom the elder, Hiranya, succeeded him, while the other, Toramana, acted as Yuvaraj.

After some time, Toramana showed sings of disobedience to his brother and struck coins in his own name. Thereupon Hiranya got offended and threw Toramana into prison. The latter's wife, Anjana, took refuge in a potter's house. She was enceinte and gave birth to a son whom she named Pravarasena, after the name of his grandfather. The potter's wife nourished him as her own child. He grew up a fine lad and the people believed him to be the potter's son.

But even in his young age he displayed signs of greatness. He used to play at king and the court and was assiduously learning to shoot at the butts. Anjana's brother, Jayendra, while in search of his sister arrived at the place where Pravarasena was playing and was struck by princely presence of the lad and by the manner in which he was playing at conducting government. He was also attracted irresistibly by his love for the boy, suspecting him, from his resemblance to his brother-in-law, to be his own nephew, and followed him in the evening to his house. Here he found his sister who related to him her misfortune. The boy on hearing the sad story of his mother and of his father being in prison, determined to grow into a strong and proficient soldier to avenge his father's incarceration.

Hiranya, at the intercession of some courtiers, released his brother, Toramana who died shortly afterwards.

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86. Vantabhawan, 8 kilometres from Srinagar on the Gandarbal road.

Hiranya had no son and at his death the throne fell vacant. The courtiers approached King Vikramaditya Harsa of Ujjain, to take Kashmir under his protection and depute someone to conduct its administration. Some time previous to this a Brahmin of Kashmir, named Matrigupta who was a learned and pious man, had gone to Ujjain to win favour and recognition at Vikramaditya's court. He had been there for six months sitting at the palace gate. One cold winter night Vikramaditya on waking up found the palace in darkness, the lamps having gone out by the blast of the wind. He called his attendants but they were fast asleep and gave no reply. Matrigupta who was sitting up outside in the palace compound heard the king's voice and he ran in and lighted up the lamps.

A conversation is said to have taken place between Matrigupta and the king who was struck by the superior learning of the poet and was at the same time touched by his poverty. It then occurred to him to grant this poor but able man the governorship of Kashmir and so he wrote to the nobles there that Matrigupta had been appointed to the high office. The following morning he summoned Matrigupta to his presence, gave him the royal warrant in an envelope, and told him to carry it to the nobles of Kashmir who would give him a fitting reward. The Brahmin, rather disappointed, being unacquainted with the contents of the envelope, returned to Kashmir. When he reached Surapura, the first stage in the Kashmir kingdom, he made over the envelope to the courtiers who had gone there to receive him and out went a fanfare of trumpets proclaiming Matrigupta as the governor of Kashmir.

Romantic as this story appears, which Kalhana treats as a text for many a moralising reflection, it yet furnishes us with an important historical clue in the mention of Matrigupt's royal patron. Vikramaditya-Harsa of Ujjain is subsequently mentioned by Kalhana as the father of Siladitya-Pratapasila, and the latter is undoubtedly the same King Siladitya whom Heun Tsiang knew to have ruled Malwa about 580 AD. This indication leads us to identify Kalhana's Vikramaditya-Harsa with the famous Vikramaditya whose rule must be placed in the first half of the sixth century. It appears probable that Vikramaditya had assisted in or at least profited by the overthrow of the Ephthalite dominion. It is, therefore, possible also that he exercised that direct influence on the affairs of Kashmir which Kalhana's narrative regarding Matrigupta seems to indicate.

That Matrigupta's brief rule in Kashmir is a historical fact is proved by a poem *Hayagrivavadha* written by the poet Mentha under his patronage. We have also genuine traditions regarding Matrigupta in the

references made by Kalhana to the temple of Matriguptaswamin built by him.

It was Dr Baudaji who first suggested that Matrigupta should be identified with Kalidasa, the great Sanskrit poet and dramatist. He based his theory on the assumption that "Kalidasa although a resident of Ujjain which he noticed in his works with evident predilection, was in all likelihood a native of Kashmir. He draws his illustrations chiefly from the natural history and physical geography of northern India, especially the Himalayas."[87]

These observations of Dr Baudaji later on led Dr L.D. Kalla to conduct extensive research on Kalidasa's birthplace, which he puts in Kashmir.

Matrigupta proved a successful ruler, was just and liberal-minded, pious and tender-hearted. He also prohibited the slaughter of animals. He built at the shrine of Madhusudana a temple called Matriguptaswamin, and donated the revenue of several villages for its maintenance. His rule, however, did not last for long, as at the death of his patron he turned a recluse and repaired to Banaras to pass his remaining days there.

Pravarasena II learnt of Vikramaditya's death and of Matrigupta's abdication, in Kangra, where he was organising an army to march on Kashmir to recover the throne of his forefathers.

Heun Tsiang distinctly tells us that Siladitya was on the throne of Malwa 60 years before his own time, that is about 580 AD which brings us to the second half of the sixth century as the approximate date of Pravarasena.

The date is indirectly confirmed by a mention of Srinagar, founded by Pravarasena and known then as Pravarapura, in the Annals of the T'ang dynasty which record that in the early part of the eighth century AD Pravarapura was the official designation of the city. Heun Tsiang does not mention it by name but calls it the 'new city', in contradistinction to Puranadisthana, the old city of Asoka, which shows that it was then recently built.

Equally convincing evidence on Pravarasena's date is supplied by the coins bearing his name, of which rare specimens both in gold and silver are possessed. These are unmistakably older than the coins of the Karkota dynasty whose rule began early in the seventh century AD.

87. For Dr Baudaji's theory of Kashmir as the probable home of Kalidasa, see his *The Literary Remains*, pp. 41-49.

Coins of Toramana, the brother of Hiranya and of Parvarasena disclose an affinity with those of the Kusan and Ephthalite kings and it seems that the kings of Kashmir till the end of the seven century came from a branch of, if not direct from, the Little Kusans.

Pravarasena was a brave, virtuous king andruled the country well. He proved his martial qualities by marching with a large army to the extreme south of India. Vikramaditya's son, Pratapasila, was being troubled by his enemies, but Pravarasena subdued them. The throne, *Singhasan*, which originally belonged to the ancestors of Meghavahana and afterwards had come into the possession of Vikramaditya was recovered by Pravarasena from Pratapasila. He thus shook off the suzerainty of Ujjain. Pravarasenaa also led an expedition to Saurashtra and defeated its ruler. He repeatedly defeated Mummuni, the chief of a clan in Central Asia.

It is also said of Pravarasena's magnanimity that the territories he conquered, gave back to their own rulers and deprived none of his inheritance.

He made his name immortal by founding the city of Pravarasenagar, now called Srinagar (the capital of Kashmir). Pravarasena died after reigning for 60 years. It is said that he bodily ascended to heaven while worshipping in his temple, Pravaresa.[88]

Yudhisthira II, his son from his queen Ratnaprabha, now ascended the throne. His ministers, named Sarvaratana, Jaya and Skandagupta, erected viharas and *caityas*.[89] Another minister of his was Vajrendra, who built caityas and other shrines at the village of Bhavachheda.[90] Kumarasena, his chief minister was a distinguished statesman.

Of Narendraditya, also called Lakhana, the son of Yudhisthira II from his queen Padmavati, we only know that he established a system of keeping records and built the temple of Narendraswamin. The addition of Lakhanaas his second name shows again the close relationship of the kings to the Little Kusans.

Lakhana-Narendraditya's rule is, according to Kalhana, followed by the fantastically long reign of Ranaditya. He is said to have ruled for three hundred years. Hasan, however, on the authority of *Ratnakar-*

88. Identified at the south-west of Hariparbat where at present stands the Ziarat of Baha-ud-din Sahib.

89. Skandabhavan vihara stood in the locality named Khandabavan near the Seventh Bridge in Srinagar.

90. Buchh is a village in the Vular Pargana.

purana says that actually six rulers were on the throne of Kashmir during this period, namely Tunjina, Sarabsena, Gandharsena, Lachmana, Suraka, and Vajraditya. But Hasan has nothing more to mention about their reigns than some mythical and fanciful stories.

About Ranaditya also Kalhana has only to record some historical traditions in the few references to shrines and other sacred objects which are attributed to him. The exploits of the King in th nether world and the wooing of his wife Ranarambha in an earlier life are some of the fanciful stories related by him.

The hero of so many marvellous tales is said to have been followed to the throne of Kashmir by his son Vikramaditya. Of his long reign of 41 years nothing is related but the foundation of some sacred buildings no longer traceable.

Baladitya, Vikramaditya's younger brother, succeeded him. His three younger brothers, Khankha, Shatrugan and Malava were his three ministers and they built a vihara, a temple and an embankment respectively. His queen Bimba built the shrine of Siva Bimbeswara at Aristotsadana.

He had a beautiful daughter, named Anangalekha. An astrologer foretold that with his death would end his dynasty, his son-in-law wearing his crown after him. The king did not like the idea of his being succeeded by the descendants of his daughter and tried to defeat Fate. He thought that a menial could never be come a king and, therefore, married his daughter to the keeper of his horses, named Durlabha-vardhana. Durlabhavardhana was, however, a born prince, being a son of NagaKarkota, which fact the king did not know. He was shrewd and clever. His qualities enabled him to attain distinction and the king bestowed on him the title of Prajnaditya and also much wealth. But Anangalekha, evidently thinking him a low class man, did not like him as her husband and, therefore, did not remain faithful to him.

She had infamous connection with the Minister Khankha. One day Durlabhavardhana saw his own wife and Khankha together in her inner place and he naturally became enraged and wanted to kill them both there and then. But he soon reflected and regained his self-control, thinking that if he killed them, the matter would become known to the public and his own honour would be lost. He wrote down upon the sleeping minister's garment that he had intended to kill him for his vile and detestable deed but had deliberately let him off. Having written this Durlabhavardhana went away. When Khankha woke up and

read the words on his clothes, he repented and desisted from such deeds in future. He never forgot the noblemindedness of Durlabhavardhana and his forgiving nature and was anxious to repay his kindness. He did it by helping him to ascend the throne of his father-in-law with whose death we come to the end of the Gonanda line of the kings of Kashmir and the Third Book of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini.*

With the accession of Durlabhavardhana (625-661 AD) to the throne of Kashmir, Kalhana's history assumes an authentic character and gives more detailed and reliable information about the dynasties that ruled from the seventh century AD to his own time (1149 AD). From here onwards we can check the majority of the recorded royal names from coins or foreign notices, and the chronology too becomes, within certain limits, reliable.

Durlabhavardhana's coins bearing the name of *Durlabhadeva* and showing a type of bold but rude execution which characterises all the known issues of rulers of this dynasty, have been found in the Valley. We have possibly a reference to him in the Chinese Annals which mention Tu-lo-pa as a king of India, who controlled the route from China to Ki-pin (Kabul valley) between 627-49 AD.

It is probable that Heun Tsiang visited the Valley during his rule. From his accounts it appears that the founder of the dynasty had already set out on a policy of expanding the territories of his kingdom, for Taxila east of the Indus, Urusha or Hazara, Simphapura or the Salt Range with the smaller states of Rajapuri (Rajauri) and Paranotsa (Poonch) had no independent rulers but were tributary to Kashmir. Of Taxila, particularly, we are told that it had been subjugated at a recent date.[91] Heun Tsiang found all adjancent territories on the west and south of the Valley down to the plains, subject to the sway of the king of Kashmir.

Beyond this Heun Tsiang's account does not contain any reference to the political condition of the kingdom. But a closer study reveals that peace and prosperity prevailed and though Buddhism claimed a large number of adherents and the king was well inclined towards the Buddhist priests, it was not the dominant faith. The building of temples of Brahmanical denomination had already started and these were "the sole thought oof the people" then.

91. That the power of the ruler of Kashmir actually extended to Taksasila (Taxila) and the Indus is proved by the fact that he personally came to visit Heun Tsiang when the latter, on his return journey, was stopping with the King of Kapisa, or Kabul, at Udbhandapura (Waihand, Und) on the Indus, see *Life*, p. 192.

This is corroborated by the *Rajatarangini* which mentions the building of temples by the queen and the princes as also grant, by the king, of villages to Brahmins in the southern districts of the Valley.

Durlabhavardhana ruled, according to Kalhana, for 36 years. The chronology of the Karkota dynasty is, however, a subject of much controversy. Kalhana's dates are given in the Laukika era which can exactly be worked out with reference to the Christian era. Kalhana, however, does not give the date of accession of the kings of this dynasty, but only the length of their reigns. We have therefore to calculate the dates of accession backwards from Cippatajayapida, a later Karkota king, whose death is recorded to have occurred in the Laukika year 3889 or 813 AD. Calculating backwards from this date, Durlabhavardhana's accession would have taken place in 600 AD.

The chronology of the Karkota dynasty would thus be:

Durlabhavardhana, 600-636, Pratapaditya II, 636-686, Chandrapida, 686-694, Tarapida, 694-699, Muktapida, 699-736, Kuvalyapida 736-737, Vajraditya, 737-744, Prithvyapida, 744-748, Sangramapida, 748, Jajja, 748-751, Jayapida, 751-782, Lalitapida, 782-794, Sangramapida II, 794-801, Cippatajayapida, 801-813, Ajitapida, 813-850, Anangapida, 850-853, Utpalapida, 853-855.

This chronology of the Karkotas could perhaps be accepted at least for working purposes, but it is seriously contradicted by the entries in Chinese Annals of the T'ang dynasty. We find a discrepancy of at least 25 years and hence Dr Stein has come to the conclusion that the dates of the rulers of this dynasty should be advanced by a similar number of years.

This, however, leads to another difficulty, as then the rule of the dynasty would be dragged down to 880 AD when we know for certain that Avantivarman was ruling in Kashmir. The only explanation would, therefore, be that Kalhana has given a longer reign to some kings of this dynasty; and hence the problem.[92]

After Durlabhavardhana's death, his son, Pratapaditya II (661-711 AD) ascended the throne. His coins bear the legent *Sri-Pratapa.* The face that several coins of this type were found in the Banda District of Uttar Pradesh and other places in India, shows the political and economic relations that Kashmir had developed under the Karkotas with the kingdoms in these parts of India.

92. For a detailed discussion on Karkota chronology see S.P. Pandit's *Introduction to Gaudavaho,* Bombay Sanskrit Series, 1888.

Pratapaditya founded a new town of Pratapapura, present Tapar, 29 kilometres to the west of Srinagar. Recent excavations at this place have revealed the foundations of large temples and buildings.

Apart from the mention of the founding of this town, Kalhana only relates of Pratapaditya the romantic episode of his marriage with Narendraprabha, previously the wife of a rich merchant from Rohtak, named Nona, who was settled in Kashmir. Narendraprabha bore the king three sons, Chandrapida, Tarapida, and Muktapida, who were also known by the names of Vajraditya, Udayaditya, and Lalitaditya.

Chandrapida (711-719 AD), his eldest son, succeeded Pratapaditya. He is mentioned in the Chinese Annals as ruling over Kashmir in 713, and was powerful enough to be recognised as king by the Chinese emperor in 719-20.

We learn from the annals of the T'ang dynasty that king Tchen-lo-pi-li of Kashmir whose identity with Chandrapida has been recognised by Klaproth, sent in 713, an embassy to the Chinese court to invoke its aid against the Arabs who were threatening his territories far to the north. A similar request had previously been made by the king of Khokand for aid against the Tibetans and Arabs who were advancing to attack him. The Emperor had sent an army to his succour and the aggressors had been completely defeated. We do not know how Chandrapida's request was answered but it is learnt that about the year 720 he was at his request granted the title of King on the Imperial Roll.[93]

Chandrapida was renowned for his piety and justice. Kalhana records that when the king began to build a temple, a leather-tanner refused to give up his hut which lay on the site. When the matter was reported to the king, he considered his own officers to be at fault, not the tanner. "Stop the building", he cried out, "or have it erected elsewhere." The tanner came himself to the king and represented that since his birth the hut had been to him like a mother , a witness of good and evil days, and he could not bear to see it pulled down. Still he agreed to part with it, provided the king himself came to his hut and asked "for it in accordance with propriety." The king agreed and went to the tanner's hut and there bought it up from the owner.

The reign of this king was full of just acts like this, and he may almost

93. It was, however, between 736-47 AD that the Chinese Emperor Yuen-Tsung (713-56 AD) an enlightened prince, directly brought his victorious armies on to the soil of the territories of the Kashmir king. His army came via Kashghar, captured Gilgit and occupied Baltistan.

be said to have fallen a martyr to them. Once he punished a Brahmin who had secretly murdered another Brahmin by means of witchcraft. The former felt deep wrath over his punishment and was instigated by the king's younger brother, Tarapida, to use his witchcraft against the king. When the king was on his deathbed, the Brahmin's witchcraft became known but the king forgave him, saying that he was only a tool in the hands of his ambitious brother.[94] Thus died the noble king Chandrapida after a reign of eight years and a half.

The *Rajatarangini* mentions the founding of temples by his queen, Prakashadevi and by his guru Mihiradatta as well as by his minister Calitaka.

Tarapida (719-724 AD) then ascended the throne. His inglorious rule of four years was full of cruel and bloody deeds. Cities and towns were deserted by the oppressed inhabitants who fled to forests and hills to escape the rapacious deeds of the king and his minions.

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94. Marco Polo records the practice of witchcraft and sorcery as being common in Kashmir. "They have", he says, "an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchantment". — See Yule, *Marco Polo,* i. p. 175.

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LALITADITYA MUKTAPIDA
(724-761 AD)

Lalitaditya, the third son of Pratapaditya II who ascended the throne after Tarapida, is chiefly known to history as a great conqueror. His reign of 37 years was marked by exploits of conquest and many expeditions, for he was essentially a tireless warrior and a great conqueror. Like Alexander the Great, Lalitaditya had a desire for world-conquest which could not be allayed, and Kalhana thus lays bare the king's ambitious mind in his own words:

> For rivers which have set out from their own region the ocean is the limit but nowhere is there a limit for those who are frankly aspiring to be conquerors.

Lalitaditya gave wide extent to his dominions. The Punjab, Kanauj, Tibet, Badakshan and other territories are said to have been brought into subjection by him. His attitude towards the subjugated kings and peoples was magnanimous and munificent; and, though his prolonged wars of conquest, like those of Alexander, at times damped the enthusiasm of his war-weary soldiers, this brave general had the knack of enkindling it again. In this regard Kalhana writes:

> Though disliked by the Generals who were uneasy at the prolonged duration of the war the king thought highly of his demand of strict observance of forms!

Lalitaditya ushered in an era of glory and prosperity for the kingdom. He was tolerant towards all schools of religious thought. Buddhism and Brahmanism, the two prominent creeds of the time, received patronage at the hands of this ruler who constructed temples for the Buddha as well as for Siva, Visnu and other gods. The king liberally patronised men of letters, and several viharas, where learning flourished a good deal, were set up. Kashmir became the synagogue of foreign scholars and erudites, and many cultural missions sent from other

countries were received with respect.

During his reign public services were re-organised and new buildings were constructed. Irrigational facilities were afforded to the cultivators and relief measures were adopted in times of unforeseen calamity. Charitable institutions, where the poor and the needy were fed every day were also set up. Many towns were founded during his long reign and he built the world famous Martand Temple. This and the few remnants of the ruins in Parihaspura testify to the splendour and massiveness with which the age moved. The kingdom was indeed at the zenith of its glory.

Before giving any detailed account of Lalitaditya's various expeditions it would be better to know the political set-up of the times and the influence upon it of the conditions prevailing beyond the frontiers of the kingdom of Kashmir.

In the South Asia of the early eighth century the times were out of joint. In northern India the Gupta empire and civilization, which three centuries earlier was at its zenith, was in its decline. As in the late Roman Empire, one ambitious general after another tried to unite the smaller kingdoms, but their rule did not last long and none was able to establish any real authority. In the Deccan the Pallava empire was fading out and that of Chalukyas of Badami dying of military exhaustion. The later powers, the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Palas of Bengal, had not yet emerged .

In the west the Sasanian empire had collapsed in 637-42, but its Muslim conquerors had just reached Sind (712 AD) and not yet penetrated the Afghan mountains and the Punjab.

In the north the Chinese under the T'angs had slowly but gradually extended their dominions to the west and at about Durlabhavardhana's time the Chinese Emperor Tai-Tsung had conquered Kucha, Khotan, Khorasan and Kashghar. But the Emperors had lost control over the provinces and the moment of the break up of the empire was near.[1]

Towards the south, Kashmir territories were in close proximity to the Kingdom of Kanauj, which under Harsavardana had acquired extensive territories and fame. During Lalitaditya's reign Kanauj was ruled by Yasovarman who, though having gained several victories over kingdoms to the south and east of Kanauj, could not compete with the power and resources of the Karkotas.

In this vacuum Lalitaditya built up his ephemeral empire. The

1. R. Grousset, *China.*

Rajatarangini is silent about his early life, but it can easily be concluded that being the youngest of the three sons of King Pratapaditya II, he must have undergone a thorough schooling in the art of state-craft under his father and his two brothers. He had already seen a great contrasting rule of his immediate predecessor and it must have brought home to him the lesson of such a suicidal policy for both the king and the people.

He was no doubt the scion of an energetic warlike dynasty, but without the Chinese political and military advice and military technique, then far superior to those of their neighbours, his extraordinary career might perhaps not have been possible. It seems that his army was mainly recruited from the north and most of his generals, including his commander-in-chief, Cankunya, also came from the same region. It appears that due to the decline of the T'ang rule, the Kashmir ruler attracted many an adventurer and Lalitaditya was not slow in taking advantage of their experience and martial abilities. For instance, it is clear that Cankunya must have acquired fame as a military commander even before he joined the services of Lalitaditya since he bore the Chinese title of Can-kiun — General.

The political condition of north-western India at that time seems to have been too obscure to permit a guess now as to the circumstances which would account for hostilities between the rulers of Kashmir and distant Kanauj. However, it can easily be presumed that Lalitaditya had already under him the territories comprising the districts of Kangra and the province of the Punjab. When Lalitaditya led his great army across the fertile plains of the Punjab, it recorded that the entire population submitted to his rule gladly and without any resistance. Yasovarman at first submitted peacefully but during the drafting of the final treaty a hitch was created when hostilities were resumed and he was dethroned and the whole territory brought under the direct rule of the Kashmir king.

By that victory Lalitaditya not only made himself master of Kanauj, but also acquired the theoretical right of suzerainty over the vast conquests of Yasovarman. In order to effectively assert these rights, Lalitaditya marched towards the east attacking king Jivitagupta of Bihar and West Bengal (Gauda) and reducing him to vassalage, advanced up to the sea coast of Orissa.

At this moment (*cir.* 735-36 AD) a call for help reached Lalitaditya from the Deccan. Indra I Rashtrakuta had abducted the Chalukya princess Bhavagana from Khaira (Gujarat) and forced her to marry him. After his death in 735 AD, the 'Ratta queen' was soon in difficulties. With

her secret connivance Lalitaditya crossed the passes into the Deccan without resistance, found the Chalukyas friendly allies and overran the Rashtrakuta territories. Karka II (Kakka, Kayya) of Lata (Southern Gujarat) was brought to Kashmir. On his way home Lalitaditya passed through Gujarat, Kathiawar, Malwa and Marwar, shaking the tottering power of the Maitrakas of Valabhi and of the Mauryas of Chitorgarh.[2]

These extensive conquests made the kingdom of Kashmir, for the time being, the most powerful empire that India had seen since the days of the Guptas.[3]

After gaining these outstanding victories in the south, Lalitaditya turned his attention to the territories bordering on the north of Kashmir. As mentioned, his kingdom extended to the farthest point in the Karakoram range controlling the overland caravan routes from India to China. We know that Arab invasion was threatening the Kabul valley already from the commencement of the eighth century and that simultaneously the Muhammadan power in Sind was making efforts to advance northwards.[4] While the Sahi rule in Kabul and Gandhara was exposed to these attacks, Lalitaditya may well have found an opportunity to extend his authority in the direction of the Indus. He led a victorious army through the Dard Desha (Dardistan) to the Tukhara country (Tukharistan of the later historians). The whole region was then thoroughly imbued with the Kashmiri traditions and learning, thanks to the efforts of the numerous Kashmiri monks and the Kashmiri settlements in the various Central Asian cities. It cannot therefore be difficult to understand that the Kashmir armies under Lalitaditya gained an easy victory there. The Chinese Empire under which they had come, was falling to pieces due to the end of the T'ang rule and the internal civil wars and dissensions.

At about this time, there is evidence to show, the Tibetans had acquired sufficient power to be capable of aggression towards the west and the east. Lalitaditya therefore turned his forces against the Tibetans in Ladakh and beyond. Ladakh was easily brought under subjugation and many victories were also gained against the Tibetans. These victories were celebrated not only during the time of Lalitaditya but even long

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2. H. Goetz, 'Sun Temple of Martand', *Art and Letters,* Vol. xxvii, No, 1. For a detailed analysis of the events see his paper on the Conquest of Western India by Lalitaditya-Muktapida of Kashmir in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 27, 1951.
3. R.C. Majumadar, *Ancient India,* p. 383.
4. Ibid., p. 381.

afterwards. Kalhana records that in his time the victories were annually celebrated and Alberuni mentions that the Kashmiris observed the second of Chaitra as a day of Lalitaditya's victory over the Tibetans.[5]

It was due to his intention to completely subjugate the Tibetans that Lalitaditya sent his famous embassy to the Chinese court. The Chinese Annals mention that U-li-to the ambassador of Mo-to-pi (Muktapida) the king of Kashmir, came to the Chinese court to seek aid from the Emperor against the common enemy, the Tibetans. That Lalitaditya should have endeavoured to enlist the friendship of the powerful Chinese king Yuen Tsun is natural enough seeing that the Tibetan expansion threatened the Chinese kingdom too. U-li-to requested an alliance between the Chinese Emperor and Lalitaditya against the Tibetans and the despatch of a Chinese auxiliary force which was to encamp in the midst of his country on the shores of the Mahapadma lake (the Wular). He offered to find provisions for an army of 200,000 men and reported that in alliance with the king of Central India he had blocked all the five routes to Tibet. The Kashmirian envoy mentioned also the great success his king had achieved against the Tibetans in all his previous campaigns. But apart from receiving the embassy in a very courteous and hospitable manner the Chinese Emperor does not seem to have found his way to accepting the proposal, perhaps due to the fact that the Emperor was himself involved in quelling a rebellion raised by General Gan Lah-Shan, an officer of Turkish descent, in consequence of which he had ultimately to flee from his capital.

Lalitaditya had therefore to undertake the subjugation of the Tibetans all alone. The *Rajatarangini* mentions a few expeditions, but apart from the definite conclusion that Ladakh and some western provinces of Tibet were brought under the sway of the Kashmir king, the complete overthrow of the Tibetans is rather doubtful. But the adventuring spirit of Lalitaditya always led him into new countries and tight situations. Once he was lured into the sand deserts of Central Asia by the wily king of that country and finding his army without water for a number of days was about to perish when accidentally a spring of fresh water was discovered which not only gave a new lease of life to him and his followers, but fanned his vindictive desire to punish the king.[6]

5. *Rajatarangini*, iv — 168.
6. Notwithstanding its half-legendary elaboration, the story of the expedition across the 'sand ocean' is completely corroborated by the experiences of Sven Hedin and other modern explorers.

Lalitaditya, not being satisfied with his conquests, set out on new expeditions and in one of them lost his life. Kalhana mentions two legends about his death which were current in his own time. Both of them agree in connecting it with a distant expedition on the north. According to one version Lalitaditya perished through excessive snow in a country called Aryanaka (modern Afghanistan). Another version made him end his life by suicide in order to escape being captured when separated from his army and blocked on a difficult mountain route.

The military exploits of Lalitaditya have naturally received greater prominence in the various accounts of his reign and have made him a hero to the Kashmiris of later periods. But his great works of architecture and public good and his intense love of learning, patronage of scholars and his great virtues as a humane conqueror are some of the qualities which should have, independent of his conquests, ranked him among the greatest kings of Kashmir.

The Valley had been till then subjected to constant floods due to the silting up of the bed of the river at Baramula and Lalitaditya was the first king to realise that by clearing the bed of rocks and silt, the flow of water would be accelerated and thus the water level would fall in other parts of the Valley. He was thus the foreunner of the great engineer of Avantivarman, Suyya. Lalitaditya got the passage cleared and thus vast areas of swamps were reclaimed for purposes of cultivation. Similarly he raised bunds round low-lying lands making them fit for growing crops. He also built numerous irrigation canals and Kalhana mentions that he erected water-wheels for lifting water to the Chakradara and other *karewas* for irrigation purposes. The cumulative effect of these works was that the production of crops increased adding greatly to the well-being and prosperity of the people.

Lalitaditya and his queens founded numerous towns. He built the towns of Suniscatapur and Darpitapur in commemoration of his foreign expeditions. There are, however, no traces of these towns now. He also built the two towns of Phalapura and Parontsa. The former may now be traced to a village near Shadipur and the latter is the town now called Poonch, the capital of the *illaqa* of the same name. He is also credited with the founding of the town of Lalitpura (modern Letapur) at which place he built a large temple. At Hushkapura (modern Ushkur), he is said to have built a big vihara and a Buddhist temple. It may be mentioned that this vihara served as the resting place of a later Chinese traveller Ou-kong who has given a grand picture of it. Lalitaditya is also recorded to have founded a town at Lokpunya (modern Lokabhavan on the

Anantnag-Verinag road). This town gained great importance as the headquarters of a group of feudal landlords (Damaras) in the later history of Kashmir. But the two outstanding constructions of Lalitaditya which have made his name immortal and added a lustre to the artistic and architectural abilities of Kashmiris are the temple of Martand and the city of Parihaspura.

> It is no longer possible, to trace with certainty the cities and remains of all the towns and structures which owed their existence to Lalitaditya. But those among them which can be identified justify by their extant ruins the great fame which Lalitaditya enjoyed as a builder. The ruins of the splendid temple of Martand which the king had constructed near the Tirtha of the same name, are still the most striking object of ancient Hindu architecture in the Valley. Even in their present state of decay they command admiration both by their imposing dimensions and by the beauty of their architectural design and decoration.[7]

Among the great architectural specimens of the world, Martand occupies a very high place. It is not only typical of Kashmir architecture at its best but is built on the most sublime site occupied by any building in the world — finer far than the site of the Parthenon, or of the Taj, or of St. Peters, or ot the Escurial — we may take it as the representative or rather the culmination of all the rest and by it we must judge the Kashmir people at their best. Younghusband, in his *Kashmir* continues:

> On a perfectly open and even plain, gently sloping away from a background of snowy mountains looking directly out on the entire length both of the smiling Kashmir Valley and of the snowy ranges which bound it — so situated in fact as to be encircled, yet not overwhelmed by, snowy mountains — stand the ruins of a temple second only to the Egyptian in massiveness and strength and to the Greek in elegance and grace. It is built of immense rectilinear blocks of limestone, betraying strength and durability. Its outline and details are bold, simple and impressive. And any overweighing sense of massiveness is relieved by the elegance of the surrounding colonnade of graceful Greeklike pillars. It is but a ruin now, but yet, with the other ruins so numerous in the Valley and similar in their main characteristics, it denotes the former presence in Kashmir of a people worthy of study. No one without an eye for natural beauty would have chosen that special site for the construction of a temple

7. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 609.

> and no one with an inclination to the ephemeral and transient would have built it on so massive and enduring a scale.[8]

The temple of Martand set the model for Kashmiri Hindu art in all the following centuries. Thus Lalitaditya must be regarded as the founder not only of a short-lived empire, but also of six centuries of Kashmiri Hindu art.[9]

An even more impressive proof of the grand scale on which Lalitaditya's building operations were conducted, is afforded by the remains marking the site of the city of Parihaspura near the present Shadipur. It is a *karewa* just opposite the junction of the Sindh river with the Jhelum, high and dry above all floods and marshes. And it stands well away from the mountain ranges on either hand, right out in the centre of the Valley so that all the higher peaks and the complete circle of snowy mountains may be seen. A nobler site could not be found and the few ruins found there in 1892 by Stein are an ample proof of the massive nature of the great buildings that must have existed there.

> Kalhana describes at length the series of great temples built by the king at this town. The extensive, though much injured, ruins with which I was able to identify these structures at the site of Parihaspura the present Paraspur, show sufficiently that Kalhana's account of their magnificence was not exaggerated.[10]

After the reign of Lalitaditya, Parihaspura passed through many vicissitudes, which explains the utter decay of the ruins therein. His son Vajraditya removed the royal residence from there and later the drainage operations of Suyya brought the confluence of the Vitasta and Sindhu from Prihaspura to Shadipur which naturally affected the importance of the town. Sankarvarman (883-901) used the materials of Parihaspura for building his new town at Pattan and Harsa (1089-1101) seized and melted some of the gold and silver images of the temples still existing therein. In the subsequent civil wars the whole town was burned down.

Lalitaditya's greatness is depicted by his extreme sense of toleration to the religious beliefs of his subjects, and his generosity towards the peoples and kings subjugated by him. Although a follower of the Hindu religion he showed equal respect to the Buddhists and founded many Buddhist monasteries and temples. His commander-in-chief was a

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8. Younghusband, *Kashmir* p. 201.
9. H. Goetz, op. cit. p. 8.
10. Stein, trans of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 300.

Buddhist and so were many of the high officials. To talented persons of all nationalities he showed great respect and regard and being a patron of learning many of the famous learned men of India and other countries came to his court. He brought from Kanauj the two famous poets Bhavabhuti and Vakpatiraja after Yasovarman's defeat and gave them the honour and respect due to them by installing them in his capital in Kashmir. Kalhana, however,does not conceal the king's faults. He mentions that he often used to give foolish orders when under the influence of drink, for example, his order to burn down the city of Pravarasena which luckily was not carried out by his wise ministers. The second was more serious. He summoned the king of Gauda (Bengal) to Kashmir and promised him safe conduct, making the image of Vishnu Parihasakesava the surety for his promise. All the same he had the king killed by assassins. It is difficult to find any motive for this foul treachery as to condone it in any way. The sequence of this event is interesting . Hearing of their king's death in Kashmir, a band of infuriated Bengali youth went there to avenge this crime and attacked the temple of Parihasakesava. While they were being cut down by the Kashmir soldiers they broke open the door of the temple and mistaking another image for that of Parihaskesava, broke it into pieces. Kalhana pays a just tribute to their heroism.

Before his disappearance from the scene, Lalitaditya is supposed to have given the maxims of policy for the guidance of his successors.

These are rather curious when viewed from modern canons of justice and sound polity, but they illustrate the principles of political wisdom which influenced the Kashmir administration in Kalhana's own time and for long after.

Lalitaditya was followed by a succession of weak kings who were unable to maintain the power and prestige of the dynasty. Short reigns and disputed successions, civil war and fantastic, aimless expeditions, such as those of king Jayapida, debauchery and extravagance, soon reduced the dynasty to a mere shadow.

Kuvalyapida, his elder son, born of the queen Kamladevi, was a pious king who, disgusted with petty intrigues of his ministers, gave up the throne and after leading a life of renunciation and piety in India, is said to have obtained supernatural perfection (*siddhi*).

Kuvalyapida's brother, Vajraditya, also named Bappiyaka who was born of Chakramardika, another queen of Lalitaditya, now ascended the throne. A tyrant and a debauchee, he passed his days in the company of

a large number of women of his seraglio. The wealth and costly articles with which his father had equipped the temples at Parihaspura, his capital, were taken away and squandered by him. For seven weary years he led his sensuous life when he succumbed to consumption brought on by his excesses.

The sufferings of the people did not end even with the death of Vajraditya. His eldest son and successor, Prithiviyapida, was equally a tyrant. After four years and one month of his oppressive rule he was dethroned by his rebellious younger brother, Sangramapida whose reign lasted for only seven days, during which there was nothing but strife with his younger brother Jayapida.

Jayapida *alias* Vinayaditya

There is happily a break in the annals of tyranny. Jayapida, the youngest son of Vajraditya, was a good and just ruler and tried to equal his grandfather, Lalitaditya, in glory. After restoring order and setting up an able administration he marched with 'eighty thousand litters' and a large number of horses on an expedition of conquest.

The long and detailed narrative which Kalhana devotes to his conquering missions, shows him to be almost as great a hero as Lalitaditya. There are a number of coins of the mixed-metal type of the Karkota dynasty bearing his other name of Vinayaditya, but there is no contemporary evidence of his having achieved the vast conquests as detailed by the poet-historian.

What Kalhana relates of the early part of his campaign is that he subjugated all the kingdoms of northern India up to Prayaga (Allahabad), where he gave in charity 10,000 horses to the priests, enjoining upon them to put his seal on the pots of the Ganges water taken by pilgrims from there to their home. This, he vainly believed, would over-awe the rulers of other kingdoms who would automatically become his vassals.

He then left his army in charge of his minister Devasarman and went on an incognito adventure to Bengal where on his way he married the daughter of a prince Jayanta who was struck by his prowess and valour when single-handed he killed a lion. Both he and Jayanta then led an army to the neighbouring territories and subjugated them.

On his return Jayapida defeated and dethroned the king of Kanauj, Vajrayudha.[11] But on reaching Kashmir he found that during the absence

11. Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 307.

of three years from his kingdom, the throne had been usurped by his brother-in-law, Jajja. Jayapida defeated him in a battle fought at Sukseletra where Jajja was killed by a stone flung on to his face with a sling by a Chandala soldier of Jayapida.

Jayapida's building activities deserve a mention. He built a city named Jayapura towards the Wular lake and marked now by the village of Andarkot. He built a strong fort there and with the marshy ground all around it, this fort was said to be impregnable. In the later history of the Valley, Jayapura with its fort was the scene of several important battles.

Kalhana mentions the founding of two more towns by Jayapida — one near his Jayapura named Dvarvati, and another at Malhanpur, present Malur on the left bank of the Jhelum, 10 kilometres below Srinagar. Kalyandevi and Kamladevi, his two queens, founded the towns of Kalyanpura, present Kalampur, and Kamlapura respectively. One of his ministers, Jayadatta, built a *matha* at Jayapura.

The king was a great patron of art and letters. He brought learned men from abroad and restored the study of the *Mahabhashya* which had fallen into neglect in Kashmir. He himself studied grammar from a learned man named Kshira. His chief pandit was the great scholar Bhatta Udbhatta, whom he used to give one lakh of *dinaras* daily. He appointed the poet Damodargupta, the author of the poem *Kuttanimata* as his chief councillor. Manoratha, Sankhadanta, Chataka and Samdhimat, the famous poets and authors, flourished at his court. Among his ministers was Vamana, one of the two authors of the *Kashikavrtti,* the famous commentary on Panini's grammar. A learned man, Thakkiya by name, though of a low position was elevated and patronised by Jayapida, for his learning. Some of them are known to us from their works and other references.

Of Jayapida's subsequent reign, which according to Kalhana's calculation, would have to be placed in the years 751-782, but which in all probability fell much closer to the end of the eighth century, few authentic details have been given in the *Rajatarangini*. We are told that he led an army against a king of the 'eastern region', Bhimasen, who imprisoned him, but from whose captivity he managed to escape through a clever stratagem. He is then supposed to have attacked the king of Nepal, Aramudi, but due to a flood in one of the rivers there, he was carried down the current and captured by his adversary who imprisoned him in a strongly built fort. From there he escaped through the loyalty of his minister, Devasarman, who killed himself to enable his master to jump into the river from the fort and cross over to the other bank on his corpse, where his army was waiting to receive him. Neither Bhimasen

nor Aramudi can, however, be traced as historical persons, but taking into account the chaotic conditions prevailing in northern India then, his incursion into these territories is not wholly improbable.

All these expeditions naturally resulted in putting a great strain on the slender resources of Jayapida, more so because they do not seem to have yielded as much loot and tribute as he had expected. The story of the Naga deity of the Wular lake directing him to a copper mine nearby shows the king's anxiety to secure funds for running the administration and paying his army. No wonder that towards the end of his rule, he suddenly turned into a tyrant and began to squeeze his subjects of what they possessed. In this he was assisted by his financial adviser named Sivadasa. For three successive years, he appropriated to himself the whole of the produce including the cultivator's share. Rapine and slaughter were the order of the day. Miserable was the condition of the people, slaughtered and plundered as they were by him who ought to have been their protector. The Brahmins who were his particular victims emigrated in large numbers and those who remained, perished. Some satirical verses which Kalhana quotes as illustrating the changed sentiments of the Brahmins towards the king may well be genuine productions of the period. Ultimately, after numerous Brahmins had sought death by voluntary starvation *(prayopavasa)* Jayapida fell a victim to divine vengeance. Kalhana describes with a good deal of dramatic force the final scene when the Brahmins of Tulamul cursed the king for his arrogance and tyranny and all of a sudden a golden pole of the canopy tumbled down and struck the king who sustained a serious injury which ended his life.

Jayapida's son, Lalitapida born of queen Durga, now ascended the throne. Addicted to conviviality, he squandered the wealth amassed by his father. He, however, made amends for his father's persecution of Brahmins by restoring to them the *agraharas* or land-grants, and endowed new ones at several places in the Valley. His uneventful rule extending over 12 years came to an end with his death. Similar was the rule for seven years of his brother, Sangramapida II, also known by the name of Prithivyapida, born of Jayapida's second queen, Kalyandevi.

After Sangramapida II came Cippatajayapida, the minor son of Lalitapida, born of his wife Jayadevi. She was the daughter of a spirit distiller, and being a pretty girl, had been taken as a concubine by Lalitapida. Cippatajayapida was guided in his young age by his maternal uncles, named Utpala, Padma, Kalyana, Mamma and Dharma. His eldest uncle Utpala held five chief offices of the State and his brothers usurped the remaining ones.

What remained of Jayapida's wealth, most of which had already been squandered away by his son Lalitapida, fell into the hands of these brothers. They conspired together when their nephew and lord was gradually emerging from childhood and got him killed, lest he assumed the powers exercised by them.

Having disposed of this puppet king after a nominal rule of 12 years, his maternal uncles grew jealous of one another and hence none of them could secure the throne. Each, however, struggled to put up the person of his choice as the nominal ruler.

Tribhuvanapida was the eldest son of Vajraditya but being a simple man and free from intrigue, his claim to the throne had been bypassed. He had a son named Ajitapida, and Utapala set him up as king. Ajitapida was, however, a convenient tool in the hands of Utpala and his brothers. They provided him with only food and clothing and appropriated to themselves the entire revenue of the kingdom.

The extent of the plunder of public monies by these rapacious men can be estimated by the large number of temples they built and the endowments they created. Utpala built the temple of Utpalasvamin and founded the town of Utpalapura, present Kakapur. Padma created the temple of Padmasvamin and founded the town of Padmapura, present Pampore. Padma's wife built one *matha* in the capital city and another at Vijayeswara. Kalyana founded the temple of Kalyanasvamin and Mamma of Mammasvamin. Mamma could afford, it is said, to give in charity 85,009 cows,each provided with 5,000 *dinaras* in outfit on the occasion of the consecration of this temple. They virtually ruled the country for thirty-six years and nine months, after which there developed jealousy and open hostility between Mamma and Utpala, resulting after much bloodshed in the discomfiture of Utpala, and the overthrow of his puppet king Ajitapida.

Mamma now replaced him by Anangapida, son of Sangramapida II. Anangapida stayed on the throne for only three years, when Sukhavarman, the enterprising son of Utpala, bent upon avenging the death of his father, collected a large number of followers and defeated Mamma's forces. Anangapida was dethroned and replaced by Utpalapida, son of Ajitapida, and a man of Mamma's choice. Then followed a process of quick accessions and dethronements of a number of puppet kings resulting in utter chaos in the kingdom. The ministers and officials changing in rapid succession, engaged themselves in appropriating State revenues and tyrannising over the unfortunate people. Even the

territories adjoining the Valley were lost, the governors and the administrators there declaring themselves independent.

Sukhavarman was meanwhile killed by one of his own relations named Suska. Thereupon Sura, the wise and able prime minister who was dominating the scene supported the direct accession of Sukhavarman's son, Avantivarman, to the throne of Kashmir, thus establishing the rule of the line of kings of the Utpala dynasty.

Avantivarman (855-83 AD)

With the accession of Avantivarman we reach that period of Kashmir history for which Kalhana's work presents us with a truly historical record. The use of contemporary accounts from the commencement of his reign onwards becomes evident, not only from the generally sober and matter-of-fact narrative but also from the use of exact dates.

Avantivarman's reign appears to have brought a period of consolidation and prosperity for the kingdom which had suffered considerably from internal troubles during the preceding reigns. He did not indulge in vainglorious expeditions outside the Valley which had sapped the resources of the kingdom in Jayapida's reign. Nor is there mention of his even attempting to regain control over the territories adjacent to his kingdom. It was certainly a wise policy. The peace and prosperity which it ensured raised Kashmir during his reign to great heights in the realms of philosophy, art and letters.

So unselfish and affectionate was he that notwithstanding his having a son of his own, he installed his step-brother, Suravarman, to the position of Yuvraj or heir-apparent. His prime minister, Sura, was a wise administrator who was guided in his duties by a verse in Sanskrit, meaning:

> This is the time to do good, while fortune, fickle by nature, is present. How can there be again time for doing good since misfortune is always imminent.

Kalhana's mention of the numerous temples built and towns founded by the king and his court, throws light on the affluent circumstances the people lived in. Sura built a temple of Siva and His consort at Suresvariksetra-at Ishabar, on the eastern bank of the Dal Lake and also a *matha* calling it, after his own name, Suramatha. He founded the town of Surapura (Hurapor near Shopyan) locating

therein the watch station which was formerly high up on the Pir Panjal pass. His wife and sons followed his example and built several temples and *mathas.*

Foremost among the foundations of Avantivarman is the town of Avantipura at the site called Vivaikasara on the right bank of the Vitasta, 27 kilometers from Srinagar on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. He had built here the shrine of Visnu Avantisvamin before his accession to the throne and, after obtaining the sovereignty, he constructed the temple of Siva Avantesvara. Their ruins, though not equal in size to Lalitaditya's structures, yet rank among the most imposing monuments of ancient Kashmir architecture and sufficiently attest the resources of their builder. He had pedestals with silver conduits made at the shrines of Tripuresvara, Bhutesa and Vijayesa.

Cordial relations subsisted between the king and his prime minister. The king had respect for his minister who was devoted to his master. The minister was always anticipating the king's wishes and without speaking to him, was meeting them quickly and at any cost. Once Avantivarman went to worship at Bhutesa and noticed on the base of the god's images some *utpala-shakha* (a wild growing vegetable called by the Kashmiris *upal-hak*) which the priests had placed there as an offering. The king inquired the reason for such a poor offering and the priests told him that a Damara, Dhanava by name, who was a friend of the minister Sura, had taken away the villages belonging to the shrine and hence they could afford to make no offering better than this to the god. This displeased the king but out of regard for the minister, he did not express his displeasure, and left the worship, feigning indisposition. The minister perceived the true cause of the king's abrupt retirement from the worship and at once summoning Dhanava to his presence, cut off his head. The king's anger was thereupon appeased and when the minister inquired after his health, the king said he was well and resumed his worship.[12]

Fully in keeping with the conditions which Kalhana's narrative indicates for the peaceful and just reign of Avantivarman, are the references to the liberal patronage which scholars and poets enjoyed at his court. Among those who are particularly mentioned are Bhatta

12. Here we have the first glimpse of a Damara lord who had grown rich and haughty after laying his hands on temple property. The disturbed conditions prevailing during the rule of the later Karkotas, seem to have given rise to a class of rich landlords who later on played an important and dominant role in Kashmir politics.

Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta, the founder of the Spandasastra branch of Kashmir Saiva philosophy, Kavi Ratnakara and Anandavardhana. Their extant works occupy a prominent position in the Sanskrit literature of old Kashmir.

Kashmir was liable to floods owing to which it yielded little produce. Lalitaditya had, with great exertions, drained out some water from the Valley after which it produced, to some extent, better crops. After him, however, the drainage operations had been neglected with the result that floods were devastating the country as frequently as ever. The price of grain had consequently gone up, one *Kharwar* (192 lb) of paddy selling at 1,050 *dinaras* in famine-stricken areas. Avantivarman and the people were in veritable despair. The king was very much grieved and thought of several plans for the relief of the people, but what could he do against the great monster — 'Famine'.

At that time appeared a man, named Suyya. His birth is woven in mystery. When a baby, he had been left by some unfortunate woman in a covered earthen pot on the roadside and was picked up by a Chandala woman, named Suyya, while sweeping there. She got him nourished in the house of a Sudra woman, who named him after that of his adopted mother. He grew up into an intelligent youth and having obtained some education, became a private teacher. Possessed as he was of a sharp intellect, there was always a cluster of sensible men around him. Whenever there was a talk of famine, he would say that he knew how to banish this monster if he were provided with the means. King Avantivarman came to know of Suyya's observation and summoned the man to his presence. Questioned as to what he was saying, Suyya repeated the same words. He would not explain his scheme and so the courtiers declared him to be mad; yet the king wanted to test him and placed his treasures at his disposal. Suyya took many pots full of money in a boat and started towards Madavarajya the southern district of the Valley. He threw a pot of money at a village called Nandaka (Nandi on the Veshau river) which was submerged with flood water and then hastily returned, going to Yakshadara (Dyara-gul meaning the place of money, near Khadanyar below Baramula) and there threw handfuls of money into the river. Who would not doubt the man's unbalanced mind. The king, however, wished to watch the result of his doings. The famine-stricken people who were watching Suyya's operations at once jumped into the river near Dyara-gul and in order to find the precious coins cleared the bed of rocks which had rolled down into the river from the hillside and had choked up the passage. In two or three days the river bed was thus cleared. Suyya then had embankments raised on either side of

the river. The river bed was further deepened and cleared of rocks. This accelerated the flow of water which speedily drained out. The sub-merged land reappeared. The pot full of money which he had dropped in deep water at Nandaka came into full view.

Previously the Vitasta and the Sindh met near Trigami (Trigom in the Lar Pargana) turning a large area into a swamp. But Suyya planned their confluence at the present place and regulated the course of the Vitasta in such a manner that it flowed right through the Wular Lake. The course of the tributaries was also regulated in a similar manner. The water was channelled for irrigation purposes and each village was allotted as much water as was necessary for its crops. Suyya had many villages reclaimed from marshy tracts by having circular embankments raised all round them to keep out water, so that they looked like round bowls *(Kunda)* and hence were named Kundala. Some villages, for instance, Utsa-kundal, Mara-Kundal, retain this designation even to this day. As a result of these works hundreds of villages were reclaimed resulting in unprecedented bumper harvests. One *kharwar* of paddy, which used to sell at 200 *dinaras* during the years of plenty, now began to sell at 36 *dinaras.*

Suyya's memory lives in the present Sopore, the town he built on the bank of the Vitasta just at the point where it leaves the basin of the Wular Lake. He also prohibited killing of fish and water-fowl in the Wular Lake. He granted the village Suyyakundala to the Brahmins in honour of his mother Suyya and constructed the *bund* Suyya-setu after her name.

Avantivarman's eventful rule was marked with internal peace and material prosperity to the country. Under him the arts of peace flourished and the rights of humanity were respected. He paid minute attention to everything that tended to promote the well-being of the population. During his reign Kashmir enjoyed a respite from natural as well as man-made calamities. Listening to the end the recital of the Bhagawad-gita, this amiable prince passed away near the shrine of Jyestheswara at Triphar, on the third day of the bright-half of Asada, in the year 3959 Laukika (June, 883 AD).

Samkaravarman (883-902 AD), his son and successor, had to contend at first with several descendants of Utpala, each of whom aspired to acquire the throne. Ratnavardhana, son of Sura, who was now the most powerful minister, remained loyal to him, but another councillor set up Sukhavarman, son of Survarman, as Yuvraj. Soon the king and the Yuvraj were at war in which the Yuyraj was defeated and imprisoned.

Having freed himself of all pretenders to the throne, Samkaravarman, according to the Chronicler, started on a round of foreign expeditions, "though the country had through the action of time become reduced in population and wealth." The first object of his expedition was the recapture of Darvabhisara, the tract of the lower hills between the Jhelum and Chenab, which had been lost during the unsettled times of the later Karkota kings. Prithvichandra, the ruler of Trigarta, the present Kangra, who came to offer homage is said to have fled in terror on seeing his immense army.

The main force of Samkaravarman's attack appears to have spent itself in a victory over Alakhana, the ruler of Gurjara. This territory, the name of which is preserved in that of the modern town of Gujrat in West Punjab, comprised the upper portion of the land between the Jhelum and the Chenab south of Darvabhisara. Alakhana submitted and ceded a part of his dominions, called Takkadesha, to Samkaravarman. The king then returned to Kashmir and built a town which he called Samkarapura (27 kilometres below Srinagar on the Baramula road) after his own name. Two temples built by the king and his queen in the new city, though now in ruins, are still standing. In constructing his town Samkaravarman was base enough to carry away all material that he found of value from Parihaspura, the favourite city of Lalitaditya.

Another expedition which Samkaravarman led to extend his kingdom was against Lalliya whom he desired "to remove from his sovereign position."[13] But though Kalhana gives details of the the campaign, he is cautious regarding the result, which we may assume to have been without any material success of his arms in this direction.

Samkaravarman was unlike his father a narrow-minded, avaricious and stern king. His rule appears to have been characterised by excessive fiscal exactions and consequent oppression. He resumed villages bestowed by former kings on different temples. As many as 64 temples were plundered by him. He introduced the system of forced labour, chiefly for transport purposes with the greatest rigour. This system of 'Begar' which spelled misery to the villagers, remained a characteristic

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13. Lalliya who was a Brahmin had overthrown the last of the Turki Sahiya kings, the descendants of Kaniska. The Turki Sahiya kings had ruled in Kabul until the capture of that city by the Arab general Yakub-i-Lais in 870. After that date the capital was shifted to Ohind, on the Indus. The dynasty founded by Lalliya, known as that of the Hindu Sahiyas, lasted until 1021 AD, when it was extirpated by the forces of Mahmud Ghazni.

feature of Kashmir administration till the beginning of the present century. We find the Kayasthas the caste of rapacious officials, favoured by the king, whereas poets like Bhallata (the author of *Bhallatasataka* and a dictionary called *Padmanjari*) not cared for. He did not talk in Sanskrit but used vulgar language and ridiculed orthodoxy. He slew Naravahana, the ruler of Darvabhisara, at night, though the latter bore no ill-will towards him — a crime of black and unredeemed treachery.

Kalhana follows up his censures of Samkaravarman's shortsighted policy by an ironical reference to the fate which overtook his only foundation. Samkarapura, the town that was to have borne his name, never rose to significance. His name was considered a word of ill-omen and, therefore, Samkarapura was called only Pattan (city). Providence did not leave him without hitting him hard by way of punishment for he lost several sons who all met with sudden death.

Samkaravarman's life and reign also found a violent end. Sukharaja who was the king's evil minister had appointed his nephew to the high office of the 'Lord of Marches'. He was killed in a frontier affray at Viranaka a village in the Jhelum valley below Baramula. The king to avenge his death himself marched at the head of his troops and after punishing the tribes inhabiting the narrow valley near Viranaka, proceeded towards the Indus. The expedition does not seem to have been a success and on his way back he was attacked and killed in Urusha (Hazara) on the seventh of the dark fortnight of Phalguna, 3977 Laukika (902 AD). To avoid the annihilation of the army at the hands of the tribesmen of the Jhelum valley, Sukharaja and other ministers cleverly concealed his death for six days until the army was conducted safely across the Kashmir boundary, four marches below Baramula, where the funeral was performed. This distinct indication of the frontier-line shows how little the political authority of Kashmir had advanced westwards by Samkaravarman's conquering expeditions.

Gopalavarman (902-904 AD), his son, still a child, ascended the throne under the guardianship of his mother, Sugandha. The minister Prabhakardeva, who was the widow-queen's paramour, exercised the real powers of the king. Kalhana records how on a victorious expedition which he had led against the seat of the Sahiya power at Udbhandapura (modern Und), he "bestowed the kingdom of the rebellious Sahi upon Toramana, Lalliya's son, and gave him the new name of Kamaluka" reference to whom is made in Alberuni's list of the rulers of this dynasty.

After a nominal rule of two years, Gopalavarman was destroyed

by the ambitious and unscrupulous minister through magic and in his place Samkuta a suppositious son of Samkaravarman was installed as king. He, however, died after only ten days' rule and then Sugandha (904-906 AD) herself assumed the royal power. She founded the town of Gopalapura (Guripur, a village on the left bank of the Jhelum below Avantipura) Gopalamatha, the temple of Gopalakeshva, and another town, Sugandhapura.

The only hope of the Utpala dynasty continuing to rule the kingdom was lost when Jayalakshmi a wife of Gopalavarman, who was enceinte gave birth to a dead child. Sugandha then wished the kingdom to go to one of her relations. She called her ministers together and asked them to select a fit successor to her. She wanted to have Nirjitavarman, one of her relatives, nick-named Pangu (lame), to be nominated but the ministers did not favour his selection. Meanwhile the Tantrins, a military caste of uncertain origin, who had assumed the position of true Praetorians raised Partha, son of Nirjitavarman, to the throne, though he was yet a boy of ten years and removed Sugandha who was disliked for her low morals, after a rule of two years.

Sugandha who had run away after her deposition to Huskapura was secretly planning to stage a come back. In 914 AD she collected enough troops of Ekangas, another body of soldiery, the rivals of Tantrins, and marched against Partha. But with the aid of Tantrins, he easily defeated her and taking her prisoner put her to death.

But the country was no better under the new rule. During the 15 years of Partha's nominal reign, the country was a prey to the oppression of Tantrins. Nirjitavarman, who had been rejected as unfit for the throne by the ministers for his low moral character, became the child-king's guardian. He could maintain himself only by paying heavy bribes to the Tantrins. In the exactions by which they oppressed the land, the soldiers were helped by unscrupulous ministers, among whom the brothers Samkaravardhana and Sambuvardhana rose to prominence. Their father Meruvardhana built the famous temple called Meruvardhana-swamin, at Puranadisthana (Pandrenthan) which is still extant, standing in the water of a shallow tank.

In 917-18 AD a famine occurred owing to the autumn rice crop having been destroyed by floods and the wrath of Nature was added to the oppressions of man. A *Kharwar* of paddy sold at 1,000 *dinaras*. People perished of starvation by thousands. The greedy ministers took advantage of this catastrophe also; they made fortunes by selling stores of grain at exorbitant prices.

Partha and Nirjitavarman were not on good terms. Sometimes the son gained the upper hand and ousted his father and sometimes the father prevailed and was restored to power. In this way the quarrel went on. In 921 AD, Nirjitavarman overthrew his son by the help of Tantrins and declared himself king. His reign lasted two years and one month and before his death he placed his child-son Chakravarman (923-33 AD) on the throne.

This child-king reigned for ten years under the guardianship of his mother and grandmother, until in 933 AD the Tantrins deposed him and raised Suravarman (933-34), the son of Nirjitavarman from another wife, to the throne. This king was gifted with good qualities but the mercenary Tantrins did not like him because he would not give them rich gifts which they expected for their having given him the kingdom. So after a year they deposed him also and elevated Partha again for a year to the throne when Chakravarman again came on the scene and promised them bigger rewards.

On his restoration, however, Chakravarman found that he had no money in the treasury to pay to the Tantrin soldiers and, therefore, fled away towards the northern districts, having occupied the throne for only a year.

Samkaravardhana the wicked minister accompanied his master to voluntary exile but secretly wished to avail of this opportunity to seize the throne. He sent his brother Sambhuvardhana to negotiate with the Tantrins. Sambhuvardhana (935-36) played false with his elder brother and secured the throne for himself offering still greater bribes to the Tantrins.

After he had lost his kingdom, Chakravarman sought and received in 936 AD the aid of a powerful Damara, named Samgrama. The Damara collected a large and ferocious army and Chakravarman marched at its head to seize the capital. The Tantrin troops, led by Samkaravardhana who had by now made up with his brother, met him at Pampore and a bloody battle ensued and was fought with an obstinacy suitable to the prize for which the parties contended. The splendid heroism exhibited by Chakravarman who himself killed Samkaravardhana won admiration from all. The Tantrins lost heavily and were completely routed. Chakravarman made then a triumphal entry into the capital and avenged himself by the execution of Sambhuvardhana who had been captured.

Though the power of the Tantrins seemed to have been crushed completely by Chakravarman's victory he profited by it but little. He

abandoned himself to a life of pleasure. A Domba musician named Ranga who had come from a distant place outside Kashmir with his two daughters, Hamsi and Nagalata, was received by the king at his court to entertain him. These two girls were pretty and the king falling in love with them took them into his seraglio, paying no regard to the fact that they belonged to a low caste. Hamsi became the chief queen. The Dombas had great influence at the court, but the Damaras who had helped him in recovering his kingdom were despised and even killed by him. Things reached the culmination point in 937 AD when the Damaras plotted to kill this proud king. One night (eighth of the bright fortnight of Jestha, 937 AD) some Damaras, finding him unarmed, treacherously murdered him in the arms of his Domba queen.

Unmattavanti (937-939 AD) whom the ministers now installed as king proved to be a still more immoral person. A son of Partha, he justified his appellation of 'mad king' by his excesses in display and debauch. He was always surrounded by people who could amuse him by their vulgarity. Parvagupta, an ambitious minister, who was scheming to capture the throne for himself, induced the depraved king to destroy his own relatives. The old Partha, the king's father, was still living with his family at Jayendravihara at Srinagar, where the charity of the Buddhist monks supported him in his helpless poverty. Unmattavanti first had Partha's young sons, his own half-brothers, carried away from there to prison, where he let them die of hunger. Subsequently Partha himself was attacked at night in the vihara and cruelly murdered. The parricide king did not enjoy long the security he had purchased by the extermination of his near relatives. He fell a victim to consumption and died in July 939 after placing on the throne a young child, Suravarman by name, whom his concubines had picked up from somewhere and had falsely declared to be the king's son.

This child-king was on the throne for only a few days. Kamalavardhana, the commander-in-chief, who desired to seize the throne and who was marching upon the city from the district of Maraj easily defeated the Tantrins and royal troops and entered the palace unopposed. It was now easy for the victorious commander-in-chief to seat himself on the vacant throne, but to give a semblance of legality to it, he sought his election as king from an assembly of Brahmins.

The assembled wiseacres, whom Kalhana describes with much humour, proved refractory and debated for several days, while Purohita corporations collected *en masse* and started a solemn fast to enforce a decision. Ultimately the choice of the assembly fell on the Brahmin,

Yasaskara, the son of Gopalavarman's treasurer Prabhakardeva, who had left Kashmir in poverty and had just then returned to his birthplace with a reputation for learning and eloquence.

Yasaskara (939-48 AD) and His Successors

The choice of the electors was fully justified by the benevolent rule of Yasaskara. The kingdom obtained a respite from civil war and internal troubles which had reduced the people to the lowest depth of misery. Kalhana praises the manifold virtues of this king and the beneficent nature of his rule. The unruly officials who plundered the royal treasury were brought under control, and the land became so free from robbery that at night the shops were left open and the roads were secure for travellers. Trade and agriculture flourished, and the moral tone of the people improved.

Kalhana gives a very favourable account of the wisdom of Yasaskara's administration of justice and quotes two illustrations intended to show his skill in the interpretation of legal contracts. Once a man who was driven to committing suicide by starvation by the unscrupulous conduct of a merchant represented to the king: "I was once a wealthy man, but falling on bad days I became poor and contracted debts. The creditors who were demanding money were pestering me. The only way, I thought, of clearing my debts was to sell off my property and go abroad in search of employment. So I sold my house to a merchant. There was a well attached to this house which yielded rent from vegetable growers and this I retained for the sustenance of my wife while I was away. Returning with a small fortune, I found on arrival my wife eking out her existence by working as a maid in a household. Knowing well that I had left for her sufficient means of maintenance, her pitiable plight surprised me. She, however, told me that the merchant who had purchased my house had driven her away from the well, saying that the house had been sold by me together with the well. I had recourse to law courts but they dismissed my claim. I am, therefore, going to put an end to my life."

The king summoned the judges and the merchant to his presence and inquired into the matter. They showed him the sale deed in which it was clearly written that the man had sold his house together with the well. But the king had doubts about it. He changed the subject of his talk, as though he had been fully satisfied on seeing the deed, and diverted his councillors' attention by discussion of some other topic. He showed an interest in the jewels that they wore and took out also from

the merchant's finger his ring for a closer examination. While admiring it he retired to another apartment telling them all to wait till he came back. From there he secretly sent a messenger with the ring to the merchant's house instructing him to show it to his accountant as a token and to get from him the daily account book of the year in which the deed had been executed for being produced before the court where it had been immediately demanded. When the book was brought, the king examined the entries under the date on which the deed had been executed and found among other items of expenditure an entry of 1,000 *dinaras* paid to the official Registrar. A small sum was payable as fee and the payment of this high sum plainly showed that the Registrar had been bribed to interpolate *sa* (together) in place of ra (without) in the deed. Then he had not only the well but also the whole house restored to the plaintiff and the merchant was suitably punished.

On another occasion a distressed man represented that he had 100 gold coins tied in his clothes which accidently fell into a well. A man offered to get the coins out and he promised that if he succeeded in recovering the coins, he might return him any amount he liked. "But he gave me," he said, "only two coins and openly retained for himself ninety-eight. When I remonstrated against this and appealed to the people who were assembled there, I was frowned out being told that in your reign all transactions are carried out in strict pursuance of the letter of the agreement."

The king consoled him and summoning the man who had retained the lion's share of the coins, recorded his statement. The man repeated precisely what the complainant had said earlier, and asserted that he had done it in accordance with the man's own stipulation. The king adjudged 98 coins to be returned to the complainant and only two to be retained by the man who had brought them out of the well. "The man", declared the king, "had stipulated that whatever *you liked* may be given to him and since you liked ninety-eight coins which you wanted to keep, they belong to him, and the two which you did not like and handed over to him, actually are your share of the amount."

King Yasaskara built a *matha* for the residence of students from other parts of India and granted 55 land-grants to deserving Brahmins.

Yasaskara's own character was not, however, without a blemish. He raised to the position of governor a man whose intrigues with the queens he connived at. He had a woman, named Lalla,in his seraglio who wielded great influence on him, though he knew that she was

having shameful relations with a low class man. Yasaskara was not a prudent king even. He displayed great joy at the death of his eldest brother, which naturally led people to suspect that he had administered poison to him.

Yasaskara who was attacked by a fatal illness, after having reigned for nine years got his cousin, Varnata, installed as king, over the claims of his own son, Samgramadeva, whom he suspected of having been begotten in adultery.

Varnata (948 AD) was not given to rule for more than a day and rightly so. He, after sitting on the throne, was ungrateful enough not to have visited Yasaskara to inquire about his condition. The latter getting angry and instigated by his scheming minister, Parvagupta, cancelled this succession and had his child-son Samgramadeva (948-949) installed as king. Yasaskara repaired to his *matha* to die there. His end was most miserable; he was forsaken even by his own family. He had 2,500 gold pieces in his clothes which his vulture-like ministers snatched away from his helpless hands and divided among themselves under his very eyes while he lay rolling in agony on his deathbed.

The minister Parvagupta who had his eye fixed on the crown since the days of Unmattavanti and whose power became supreme after Yasaskara's death, first put Samgramadeva's grandmother as the child-king's guardian and himself, together with other ministers, exercised all the power. Not satisfied with this he collected his troops and laid siege to the palace, intending to sweep away the nominal ruler, Samgramadeva, also. Samgramadeva had a faithful minister, Ramavardhana, who put up a fight but Parvagupta slew him together with his son. This infernal wicked minister then entered the palace and killed Samgramadeva most cruelly, dragging him down from the throne and throwing him into the Jhelum with a stone tied to his neck.

Parvagupta (949-50 AD) who was descended from a humble family of clerks did not enjoy long the possession of the crown which he had obtained with so much treachery. During the short rule, however, he oppressed the people and exacted money from them. To perpetuate his memory he founded with his ill-gotten wealth the shrine of Siva, called Parvaguptesvara, at the Skandabhavanvihara, on the right bank of the Jhelum near the sixth bridge in Srinagar.

This wicked king proposed to a widow of Yasaskara, named Gauri, a lady of superb beauty. But she was a pure-hearted woman and this insult was unbearable to her. She, however, desired to see the temple of Yasaskarsvamin, which her husband had left unfinished,

completed, and so she sent him word that she would marry him provided he first completed this temple. Parvagupta was delighted to receive this conditional consent and fired with lustful desire he got the temple completed with the greatest possible, speed. He now expected to win his sweetheart but lo! this virtuous lady suddenly kindled a fire and, in order to save her honour, jumped into it and sacrificed her life.

The circumstances of the king's private life including this tragic and horror-inspiring incident made him the object of intense odium and scorn, while his public acts and infidelity to his master, Samgramadeva, left an indelible stigma on his reputation.

Within a year and a half of his accession he died of dropsy leaving the throne to his son and successor, Kshemagupta (950-958 AD). The new king was a youth grossly sensual and addicted to drinking, gambling and other vices. A court of depraved parasites encouraged him in his excesses. The famous Jayendravihara which had been built by Jayendra, the maternal uncle of king Pravarasena II, was burned down by the king's soldiers because a powerful Damara had taken refuge there and the priests would not give him into their hands. For the benefit of his own temple named Kshemagauresa, he plundered this vihara using the molten brass of the Buddha image in it to cast the image for his own temple. This perhaps is the only signal act of his reign.

Didda The Dominating Queen

Insignificant as Kshemagupta was as a ruler, he was yet destined to influence materially the history of Kashmir during the next centuries by his marriage with Didda, the daughter of Simharaja, chief of Lohara. This territory which has left its name to the present valley of Lohrin, comprised the mountain districts immediately adjoining Kashmir Valley on the south-west and now included in the Poonch district. Kshemagupta's union with Didda brought Kashmir under the rule of the Lohara family, which continued to hold Kashmir as well as its own original home down to the times of Kalhana and later.

The king was so enamoured of his wife that people nick-named him 'Diddakshema'. We have documentary evidence of this exceptional position in the legend of Kshemagupta's coins where the *Di* prefixed to the king's name is undoubtedly intended as an abbreviation of *Didda*. He also married the daughter of Phalguna, his chief minister, named Chandralekha. The maternal grandfather of queen Didda named

Bhima Sahi, built during Kshemagupta's lifetime the temple of Bhima-kesava at Bumzu near Martand, and endowed it with rich grants of land.

Kshemagupta who was passionately fond of jackal-hunts contracted a violent fever during one of these. He was removed to his *matha* at Baramula and there he died on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Pausa (December) in the year Laukika 4034(958 AD).

Kshemagupta's child-son, Abhimanyu (958-972), was now installed as king, his mother Didda becoming the regent and exercising all royal power herself. Cruel, suspicious, unscrupulous, and licentious in the extreme, Didda combined in her character an inordinate lust for power with statesman-like sagacity, political wisdom, and administrative ability.

The early years of the queen's regency were full of troubles and risks. Didda had been in enmity with the prime minister, Phalguna, owing to the jealousy she had with her rival, his daughter. The old commander-in-chief, Rakka, now poisoned her mind against him saying that he was preparing to usurp the throne. Phalguna came to know of this and, to avoid a mishap to himself, left for Poonch where he intended to stay until the return of his son, Kardamaraja, who had gone to deposit the ashes of Kshemagupta into the Ganges. He was accompanied by a large force and while he was on his way, Didda sent her orderlies after him. The general returned with his troops to Baramula. Didda and her advisers on hearing of his return were afraid lest he raise the banner of revolt, but Phalguna left his sword at the feet of the image of god Varaha at Baramula and so dispelled all suspicion of treason from the mind of Didda. Phalguna then proceeded to Poonch to the great joy of other ministers who were jealous of his power, and Didda, who was afraid of his influence and power, now began to breathe freely.

But Didda had yet to encounter real enemies. Parvagupta's grand-sons, Mahiman and Patala, born of his two daughters, were eager to seize the throne. The queen had ordered to deport them, but they collected a force and arrayed themselves for a battle at Pampore. At this critical moment the minister Naravahana remained faithful to the queen and stood by her. The queen managed to bribe several of the pretenders' supporters and promised high posts to many, and thus the revolt fizzled out.

Yasodhara, who was one of these, and to whom the queen had been obliged to give the chief command of her forces, had to face the same fate as befell Phalguna. Once he led an expedition against the Sahi

ruler, Thakkana, and won a victory. This caused jealousy among other officials and they intrigued to poison the mind of the queen against him, telling her that he would now seize her throne. When the commander-in-chief expecting royal favours for the victory he had gained, returned, the queen to his great surprise, sent orderlies to deport him. This insult created another rebellion. The troops got disaffected and the situation became critical for the queen, but at this crisis also the faithful minister, Naravahana, stood by her side. With his help and advice the queen gathered her troops and a skirmish took place in which the rebels were defeated. Then the infuriated queen took a terrible vengeance by mercilessly executing all captured rebels and exterminating their families.

On Naravahana she conferred honours and continued to rule with his advice. But the royal favours, as in the case of others before him, were a prelude to his destruction. Other officials got envious of Naravahana and the intrigues began to be directed against him. The fickle-minded queen was led astray by them and her ears were poisoned against Naravahana. When one day the minister invited her to a feast she refused to accept the invitation, and this and other insults drove the loyal minister to suicide.

Didda now wanted a strong minister to assist her in carrying on the government and she recalled Phalguna from Poonch. This minister once hated and dreaded, became the favourite and a paramour of this dissolute old woman.

Abhimanyu, himself bearing an irreproachable character, became miserable and sick to see the evil conduct of his mother. He contracted consumption and died in 972 AD. Over and above the repressions suffered by the people as a result of the misrule of his mother, a devastating fire destroyed a large part of Srinagar during his reign.

Abhimanyu was succeeded by his son, Nandigupta (972-73). The grief of her lost son softened for some time the heart of Didda and she, in expiation of her immoral acts, founded several temples and villages in different parts of the kingdom, amongst which were Diddamatha, now known by the name of Diddamar, a *mohalla* in Srinagar on the right bank of the river near the seventh bridge.

But this conduct of hers lasted for a year only. She then forgot her grief and her lust for pleasure and power returned. She destroyed Nandigupta by witchcraft as also her another grandson, Tribhuvana (973-75) who had ascended the throne after his brother's death.

Didda's third and last grandson, Bhimagupta (975-981) who was

yet a child, was installed as king under her guardianship. Some time after, the minister Phalguna died. The wicked queen was, out of respect for him, so far concealing her shameless acts, but as soon as he died she began to commit excesses with impunity. She fell in love with a buffalo herdsman, Tunga by name, who had come to Kashmir from Poonch and who had obtained service as a letter-carrier. Bhuyya, a pious man who after Abhimanyu's death had induced the queen to desist from sinful deeds, disliked the despicable conduct of hers and she, unable to get rid of him by honourable means, had recourse to the method she knew well enough and succeeded before long in disposing him of by poison.

After four or five years Bhimagupta was a little more developed in intellect and realised that his grandmother's way of living was bad. The diabolical and perverse-minded Didda, thereupon, getting alarmed imprisoned him and put him to death by torture.

Didda (981-1003 AD) now ascended the throne herself. She elevated her paramour, Tunga, to the post of chief minister and his five brothers to other important offices of State. The discontented ministers and officials who were ousted entered into league to raise a rebellion. They brought Vigraharaja, a relative of Didda, into the conspiracy and spread disaffection among the Brahmins inducing them to hold solemn fasts *(prayopavasa)* against the queen and Tunga. But Tunga's valour and Didda's cunning diplomacy and bribes defeated these attempts. During her reign of 25 years, there were political intrigues, murders, banishments and denunciations, *ad infinitum.*

The chief of Rajauri, Prithvipala, showed signs of unrest and Tunga led an expedition against him. Prithvipala attacked the Kashmir troops in a defile and killed two of the ministers. Then Tunga together with his brothers entered Rajauri by another route and set fire to the town. By this successful attack, Prithvipala was forced to surrender and pay tribute. Tunga, victorious and triumphant, returned to Srinagar and in recognition of the victory was made also commander-in-chief of Didda's army.

The statesman-like instinct and political ability which must be ascribed to Didda in spite of all the defects of her character are attested by the fact that she remained to the last in possession of the Kashmir throne, and was able to bequeath it to her family in undisputed succession. In order to assure the latter she appointed Samgramaraja, the son of her brother, Udayraja, the ruler of Lohara, as heir-apparent choosing him amongst a large number of her other nephews, all young boys. She placed a heap of apples before them and told them that she would

see how many could each pick up. There was a scramble among these youngsters. But she noticed that Samgramaraja had picked up not only the largest number, but was quite unhurt. She asked him how he had succeeded in getting so many and he replied that while remaining aloof from the scramble he had induced other boys to do so and in the fighting that ensued he had picked up the fruits with ease. On hearing this, that adept in statecraft, Didda considered him the wisest and fittest of them all for the throne of Kashmir.

And thus when the aged queen died in 1003 AD, after half a century of ruthless government, first as queen consort, then as regent and ultimately as sovereign, the crown passed quietly and without a contest or convulsion to the new dynasty, the House of Lohara.

5

THE DECLINE OF HINDU RULE

The brief spell of imperialism which Kashmir experienced under Lalitaditya was perhaps the best period in its history. All that was good and bright in a people brilliantly shone forth and the small kingdom was raised to the pinnacle of glory by a succession of eminent rulers.

Though the end of the rule of the Karkota dynasty was inglorious, the subsequent rule of Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty was benevolent and peaceful and learning and art received patronage.

After this, however, the history of Kashmir is written in decay. The quick succession of brief and oppressive reigns, intrigues and rebellions, civil war and political murders, reduced the kingdom to a minor principality, shorn of its past glory and of all the territories tributary to it.

The change of dynasty after Didda's death, however, made no appreciable difference to the kind of rule that the unfortunate people had grown accustomed to. Samgramraja (1003-28 AD) who succeeded her, retained Tunga in his post of prime minister. The prudent but personally weak king would not attend to the affairs of the State and Tunga was, therefore, supreme in power. Tunga had in the earlier part of Samgramaraja's rule to face a revolt of ministers and Brahmins. But he quelled the rising with a strong hand. Some rebels were killed, some imprisoned and others banished.

Mahmud's Invasion

The period covered by Samgramaraja's reign witnessed a great upheaval in the political conditions of Northern India, which was destined to fundamentally change the course of Indian history. Mahmud of Ghazni led a number of expeditions and swept across the Indus valley and along the Punjab plains in the early decades of the eleventh century. He did indeed stop short of the mountain-ramparts protecting

Kashmir, and the several expeditions which Mahmud led in that direction never seriously threatened the independence of the Valley.

Nevertheless, we find a distinct record of these events in Kalhana's Chronicle in the account of the expedition which was despatched to the assistance of Trilochanpala.

In Mahmud's fourth expedition to India, Anandapala, the ruler of Udbhandapura, was, after a hard and prolonged struggle, compelled to make peace. After Anandapala's death, Mahmud turned again towards India and this time Anandapala's son, Trilochanpala, who had also previously met this foe in war during his father's reign, went to beat him back. He asked Samgramaraja for help against the enemy. Samgramaraja sent a large body of troops under the command of Tunga. These troops were not fully versed in the new tactics of war which the invaders were adopting and of which Trilochanpala had by then gained enough experience. Trilochanpala therefore advised Tunga to take a defensive position on a high place of vantage. But he, proud of his fancied bravery, neglecting this sound advice rashly attacked Mahmud's army on the bank of river Tause, some distance from Poonch. He defeated a detachment of the enemy sent on reconnaissance. Next morning Tunga was surrounded by the full force of Mahmud. A fierce battle ensued in which Tunga was defeated and Trilochanpala's forces routed. Trilochanpala fought bravely and although subsequently he made several attempts to regain his territory and throne, they proved of no avail. The downfall of that once powerful dynasty of Sahiyas was complete.

Crest-fallen Tunga returned to Kashmir to face fresh intrigues which ended in his disgrace and death. His son, Kandarpasimha, who had become haughty and was going about with pomp and show was hated by the king, who now planned to have both the father and the son arrested simultaneously. Tunga came one day to the palace accompanied by his son. This was a favourable opportunity for the conspirators to make an end of them. When they were coming out after an audience with the king, the conspirators fell on them in the palace compound and cut them up with swords. Tunga's attendants put up a brave fight, but were overpowered and killed by the royal troops.

After Tunga the commander-in-chief's post was conferred on Naga, one of whose brothers had been the prime mover in the conspiracy against Tunga. Bhadreswara who, like Naga the commander-in-chief, was a mean fellow, became the prime minister. He was the son of a vegetable gardener and had for some time adopted the calling of a

butcher and fuel-vendor. Tunga, himself of mean origin, had appointed him as his assistant but he was secretly planning his master's overthrow all the while. Other posts of responsibility were given to equally bad men who robbed the treasury as well as the people.

Kalhana is, however, silent on Mahmud's attack on Kashmir which occurred probably in his sixth expedition to India when he marched to invade the Valley via the Tosamaidan pass. The fort of Lohkot on the southern slopes of the Pir Panjal range, and not far from the Tosamaidan pass, stood in the way and this brought Mahmud's only serious attempt at the conquest of Kashmir to a standstill. Weather seems to have played the decisive role. The siege of this stronghold at which Alberuni too was present, proved fruitless. "After a while, when the snow began to fall and the season became intensely cold, and the enemy received reinforcements from Kashmir,"[1] the Sultan was obliged to abandon his design and to return to Ghazni.

Samgramaraja died in 1028 AD and his son and immediate successor, Hariraja (1028 AD), who is said to have been a youth of good disposition, ruled for only 22 days. His death is attributed to his licentious mother, Srilekha, who endeavoured to secure the crown for herself after him.

To the great disappointment of the queen, the nobles of the kingdom installed her young son Ananta (1028-1063 AD) as king. Ananta's paternal uncle, Vigraharaja, the ruler of Lohara, who had been intriguing for a long time to secure the throne for himself, made an attempt to oust Ananta, but he was defeated and together with his followers was burnt to death in a *matha* where he took refuge and which was set on fire by the royal soldiers.

Ananta, however, proved a feeble, cowardly prince, utterly unable to cope with the difficulties thickening around him. He depended upon the advice and administrative skill of two Sahi princes, Rudrapala and Diddapala who took service under him. They were highly paid and wielded enormous influence. Rudrapala attained such eminence that the Raja of Julundhar, Induchandra, gave his daughter to him in marriage, and he prevailed upon Ananta to marry her younger sister named Suryamati. With this relationship with the king, Rudrapala was emboldened to further rob the State of its revenues. The weak king could not prevent officials like Dullaka and Padmaraja to embezzle state funds. No wonder that he was impoverished and being addicted to chewing betel

1. Alberuni's *India*, ii. p. 13.

leaves, pawned even his crown to Padmaraja.[2] The queen had to redeem it with funds from her own treasury. He was fond of horses and employed mean jockeys with whom he was as intimate as if they were his equals.

With the death of the two Sahi princes, Ananta, who seems to have been incapable of carrying on the administration by himself, came under the influence of his pious queen, Suryamati. She checked the extravagance and vagaries of the king, and gradually assumed full charge of the royal affairs. Haladhara, a servant of humble origin who by her favour rose to be prime minister, proved a strong administrator and secured for a time prosperity and peace for the land. This enabled Ananta to lead expeditions to territories adjoining Kashmir on the south and assert his authority in those tracts. We learn from Bilhana's *Vikramankadevacharita* that Ananta's supremacy was acknowledged by the princes of Champa (Chamba) and Darvabhisara. Kalhana, however, records only a victory over king Sala of Champa, who is known to us by his full name of Salavahana from a Chamba grant plate. Of Ananta's expeditions against the hill states of Urusha and Vallapura, we are distinctly told that they ended in failure and ignominious retreat.

But one feminine weakness destroyed all that queen Suryamati had achieved. Blinded by filial affection, she persuaded the king to abdicate in favour of his son, Kalasa, in the year 1063.[3] The object, perhaps was to put the administration into stronger hands and to secure the throne for her son. But soon after the formal coronation of Kalasa, the royal couple regretted the act, and Ananta resumed the de facto administration of the government, keeping Kalasa the nominal king.

2. An incidental observation of Kalhana pertaining to Padmaraja, the betel merchant with whom Ananta had pawned his royal diadem, throws light on the political conditions prevailing in northern India during this time. Padmaraja was also an agent of King Bhoja of Malwa for the supply to him of holy water from the spring of Kapatesvara in Kashmir. He employed a relay of carriers from Kashmir to Malwa for this purpose. This shows that notwithstanding the political isolation of Kashmir and the Muhammadan conquest of the region to the south, regular intercourse and trade with the Hindu kingdoms of the rest of India must have continued.
3. At this time a similar event took place in the neighbouring principality of Lohara. Ananta's cousin Ksitiraja who ruled there, renounced the world and disliking his own son, bestowed the kingdom on Utkarsa the second son of Kalasa. This was destined later to lead to a political union of Kashmir with Lohara on Utkarsa's succession in Kashmir.

For a number of years after Kalasa's coronation the arrangement devised by Ananta of ruling the land himself and keeping his son as the nominal king, worked well. But Kalasa came under the baneful influence of depraved and licentious companions, who drove him to commit excesses. Many a time the youthful king was involved in *fracas* in which he suffered public disgrace. This led to an open rupture between the king and his parents. Queen Suryamati, however, prevailed upon Ananta not to take strong action against Kalasa, and advised him instead to repair to the temple at Vijayeswara along with stores and treasure. For some time Kalasa experienced difficulties for want of money but the field having been now left open, he organised the administration efficiently and raised an army to fight his father's forces. Suryamati again intervened and though Ananta with his treasure and loyal army had still the power to punish Kalasa and forcibly depose him, she prevented open hostilities to break out and effected a reconciliation. Ananta contended himself by calling Harsa, Kalasa's son, whom he desired to place on the throne, to live with him at Vijayeswara.

This reconciliation, however, ended soon. Kalasa raised more forces and attacked Vijayeswara, setting fire to the temple where Ananta was staying. Ananta lost his treasure and thereby the means to retain the allegiance of his troops and followers. He thus fell easily into the hands of his son who insisted on his going into exile. Ananta's condemnation of his wife's baneful advice resulted in a violent altercation between him and his wife during which he committed suicide by plunging a dagger into his abdomen. Suryamati repented for her angry words which had led to this tragedy and ended her life as a sati on her husband's funeral pyre.

Kalasa's character changed for the better following his parents' death and devolution on him of responsibilities on assumption of full regal powers. After effecting a solemn reconciliation with his son Harsa, the king set about to improve the administration of the kingdom and by a wise and shrewd control over the state budget removed the financial stringency which had resulted from uncertain political conditions and civil war. He was thus able to make some rich endowments. He used to move about incognito over his kingdom and had thus a first-hand knowledge of the living conditions of his subjects. He punished corrupt officials and restored the confidence of the people in the government. In this he was ably assisted by capable ministers like Vaman and the great Kandarpa, the commander of the frontier defences.

An era of peace and prosperity following these measures, enabled Kalasa to assert his authority in the neighbouring principalities. An

expedition in support of Samgramapala, the rightful ruler of Rajauri, restored Kashmir's suzerainty over this hill state. Similar expeditions to territories south of the Valley resulted in the consolidation of the kingdom and making his influence felt among the small hill states. This success of Kalasa's foreign policy was strikingly demonstrated in the winter of 1087-88 AD when he held an assembly in his capital of the rulers of eight hill states around Kashmir from Urusha in the west to Kastavata in the east. Among them was Asata the chief of Champa (Chamba), whose name is found in inscriptional records as well as in the geneological list of the Chamba Rajas; Kirti, the chief of Nilapura whose daughter was married to Kalasa; Samgramapala, the chief of Rajauri, who was reinstated to the throne by Kalasa's forces. Utkarsa, Kalasa's second son, the chief of Lohara; Sangata the king of Urusha; Gambhirasiha the ruler of Kangra; and Uttamaraja the ruler of Kastavata were the other chiefs who attended this assembly.

The last years of Kalasa were embittered by the disunion and suspicion between himself and Harsa. The youthful prince, extravagant by nature and given to a life of ostentation, felt annoyed at the scanty allowance and low regard which his miserly father bestowed upon him. Evil minded parasites took advantage of Harsa's disposition and instigated by them he connived at the hatching of a plot to murder Kalasa. This was betrayed to Kalasa, who tried to obtain from his son a repudiation of his part in it, but Harsa refused to do so. Harsa was threatened by his fellow conspirators and when he was in serious danger of losing his life at their hands, Kalasa ordered his arrest (1088 AD). Smitten and exasperated by the disloyal conduct of his son, Kalasa again took to the licentious life of his youthful days. He spared Harsa's life but decided to deprive him of the succession. He called his younger son, Utkarsa from Lohara in order to have him installed as ruler of Kashmir. At the approach of death, which his excesses hastened, Kalasa set out in great torments to the temple of Martand, where he died, after vainly endeavouring to see once more the imprisoned Harsa (1089 AD).

Utkarsa's accession to the throne was facilitated by Harsa's continued confinement in prison. His desire to retire abroad was turned down and apprehensive of his safety, he managed to win the sympathy and help of his younger half-brother Vijaymalla. The latter felt dissatisfied with the treatment he received at the hands of Utkarsa and raised an open rebellion. The cowardly Utkarsa thought of having Harsa murdered in prison, but owing to Harsa's presence of mind and his own vacillation, the murderous attempt failed. Availing himself of the confusion that

prevailed in the palace following Vijayamalla's rebellion, Harsa managed to escape and seized the throne which belonged to him by right.

Harsa (1089-1101 AD)

King Harsa was a remarkable person in many ways. Possessed of exceptional prowess, he obtained renown by merits rarely to be found in other kings. Versed in many languages, a good poet, a lover of music and arts, and a repository of different branches of learning, he became famous in other kingdoms too. The songs which he composed were still heard with delight in Kalhana's time. We see these and his contrasting qualities of mind, reflected in the elaborate description which Kalhana gives of the character of this striking figure among the later Hindu rulers of Kashmir. This was no doubt based on firsthand information, such as that given by his own father Champaka. Kalhana pictures to us King Harsa as a youth of powerful frame and great personal beauty, courageous and fond of display and well versed in various sciences. In an eloquent passage, he emphasises the strongly contrasting qualities of Harsa's mind and equally strong contrasts in his actions. "Cruelty and kind-heartedness, liberality and greed, violent self willedness and reckless supineness, cunning and want of thought — these and other apparently irreconcilable features in turn display themselves in Harsa's chequered life." From this description of Harsa's character, it can easily be gathered that he was a man of unsound condition of mind.

Harsa commenced his rule well. He showed wise forbearance in retaining many of his father's officials and trusted servants, notwithstanding their former conduct towards him. This paid quick dividends. Not only were the intrigues and disaffections, raised by his half-brother Vijayamalla, nipped in the bud, but he had to flee to, and take refuge in, Dard territory where he met his end under an avalanche. Harsa's position was thus consolidated and Kalhana gives a glowing account of the splendour of the Kashmir court at this time of his reign. He introduced many new fashions in dress and ornaments and encouraged his courtiers to imitate his own taste for costly and gaudy attire. His munificence towards men of learning and poets is said to have made even Bilhana, the well-known court poet of the Chalukya king, Parmadi, regret that he had left Kashmir, his native land, during Kalasa's reign. Kalhana refers to the introduction of Carnatak tunes and musical instruments and coinage into Kashmir by Harsa, and several extant coins of the king corroborate the unmistakable imitation of contemporary coinage of Carnatak. An indication of prosperity and

affluence enjoyed by Kashmir during Harsa's early rule is given not only by Kalhana's description of the magnificence of Harsa's court, but by the abundant issue of gold and silver coins.

At about this time Harsa sent a strong force to assert his suzerainty over Rajauri, whose chief, Samgramapala, had for some time been trying to shake it off. The Kashmir troops under Kandarpa, the able commander-in-chief of Harsa, stormed Rajauri town and after a bitter struggle in which two hundred Kashmiri soldiers lost their lives, carried the town and forced Samgramapala to surrender and pay tribute.

But soon the evil parasites and councillors came to the fore and succeeded in securing the disgrace and banishment of this valiant and faithful general. Treachery began to stir among those nearest to the throne. Jayaraja, a half-brother of Harsa, from a concubine of Kalasa, engaged in a dangerous conspiracy with Dhammata, a relative from another branch of the Lohara family. Harsa, however, came to know of it early, and with skilful diplomacy he drove a wedge between the two and when Jayaraja had surrendered to his fellow conspirator, Dhammata, he got him executed. Dhammata's turn followed and he together with his four sons met his death by sword and hangman. Harsa put out of the way other relatives in a similar manner, though they had given no cause for suspicion.

Extravagant expenditure on the troops and senseless indulgence in costly pleasure involved Harsa in grave financial difficulties. New and oppressive taxes were imposed and as a characteristic feature Kalhana mentions that "even night soil became the object of special taxation." These, however, proved inadequate to replenish the exhausted treasury. Harsa then turned his attention to the rich endowments of temples, which he resumed. His accidental discovery of hoarded treasures at the temple of Bhima Sahi, induced him to spoliate other temples. More ruthless and revolutionary was the seizure and melting of gold and silver images of gods and goddesses in temples throughout Kashmir and Kalhana's mention of a few temples which escaped Harsa's attention only shows the thoroughness of his iconoclasm. That Kalhana uses the epithet of Turuska (Muhammadan) while referring to Harsa's temple spoliations and also makes a reference to Turuska captains being employed in his army and enjoying his favour, shows that Muhammadan influence must have already penetrated to Kashmir in his time.

The rising discontent among the people who were burdened with heavy imposts, together with the unpopularity of his vandalistic acts,

made Harsa fall lower in his morals and fanned by the depravity of his parasites he indulged in incipient acts of incest with his sisters and father's widows. This further sapped his strength and mental balance, and the few expeditions he led against some of the hill states who had given up his suzerainty, show him as a weak, vacillating and timid commander. An attempt to invade Rajauri, with himself in command of troops, ended in an ignominious defeat and subsequently a similar fate met his expedition for the capture of the fort of Dugdhghatta which guarded the pass leading to the Dard country. An earlier fall of snow compelled the royal forces to beat a retreat and the attack from the Dards turned it into a complete rout. It is in this campaign that we first notice the two brothers, Sussala and Uccala, valiantly fighting for the king. They were descended from a side branch of the Lohara family and destined to succeed Harsa to the throne of Kashmir.

In 1099 AD fresh calamities befell the miserable people of Kashmir. While plague was raging and robbers everywhere infesting the country, there occurred a disastrous flood which carried off the ripened crops. A severe famine followed adding to the universal distress. The fiscal exactions of the king continued. To divert the attention of the discontented and rebellious people, Harsa attacked the Damaras, or feudal landlords. Kalhana gives revolting details of cruelties perpetrated on them under the king's orders.

While the Damaras of the northern division were organising a united resistance to the king's forces, Harsa's suspicions were raised against the brothers Sussala and Uccala as possible claimants to the throne. Both of them fled at night from Srinagar in the autumn of 1100 AD, and with the help of Damaras took refuge with the hill chiefs — Uccala in Rajauri and Sussala in Kalinjara. The rebellious Damaras opened negotiations with Uccala, the elder brother, and induced him to claim the crown. His claims were based on geneological facts. He was through Jassaraj, Gunga and Malla, the fourth direct descendant from Kantiraja, the brother of Didda and uncle of king Samgramaraja of Kashmir.

Uccala being joined by a small force of rebel Damaras, boldly set out for Kashmir and crossed the Tosamaidan pass in the early months of the spring, while it was still covered with snow. There he was joined by disaffected hill tribes and Damaras and the large force so formed marched to effect a junction with the rebel Damara forces of the northern division. The combined forces under Uccala successfully attacked Harsa's governor of the district and occupied a strong position in

Parihaspura. The king roused to activity by the near approach of danger attacked the pretender at Parihaspura and obtained a complete victory. Uccala escaped with difficulty while many of his followers met their death before and within the temple quadrangle of Parihaspura.

While Uccala, left unpursued by the King, was engaged in reorganising his forces in the north of Kashmir, Sussala, aided by the forces of Kalha, the ruler of Kalinjara, launched his attack on Kashmir from the south. Here he was joined by the few remaining Damara chiefs and they drove the royal forces before them in the direction of the capital. Though successfully checked for a time by Harsa's newly-appointed commander-in-chief, Chandraraja, this diversion enabled Uccala to resume the offensive. Avoiding the open plain, where the king's mounted troops could effectively defeat them, the rebel Damara forces marched across the mountains into the Sindh valley where they won a complete victory over the king's army, thus leaving the road to the capital open for Uccala.

Harsa's Dethronement and Death

While the rebel forces were knocking at the doors of Srinagar, Harsa, surrounded by sycophants and incapable advisers, was vacillating in his plan of action. Some advised him to abandon the city and flee to the mountain fastness of Lohara. Some were of the opinion that the king should stand fast and fight to the end. Utter confusion prevailed and there were incessant desertions. While the royal forces were getting thinner, and treason was rife among the officials and royal attendants, Harsa turned upon the innocent Malla, the father of Uccala and Sussala, who leading the life of a recluse had peacefully remained in the city. Harsa had him ruthlessly killed and Kalhana gives a graphic account of the scene when Malla's widow, Nanda, while watching the camp fires of her son's armies gleaming in the distance, burned herself after her husband's death, invoking their revenge upon the head of his murderer.

The news of this murder further infuriated Uccala and Sussala. Sussala launched his attack on Vijayeswara and defeating the royal forces there, hastened to Srinagar in the hope of seizing the crown for himself. His attack was halted by a spirited defence by royal forces under Bhoja, Harsa's heir-apparent. Uccala at this moment launched his attack on the city from the north and aided and abetted by disloyal elements, surrounded the royal palace. Harsa led in person the remnants of his troops but while vainly attempting to halt the onslaught at the bridge in

front of the palace, his fighting elephant was wounded and turning back threw his forces into disorder and panic. Harsa managed to retire across the bridge but the rebels set the adjoining buildings on fire which forced the king to leave the palace with a few mounted troops. Seventeen ladies of the royal household, among them the chief queen Vasantalekha, who was a princess of the Sahi house, burned themselves on a pavilion of the palace from which they had watched the approaching doom. The palace was sacked and set on fire by plundering Damaras who were joined by the city mob.

Harsa was eager to die fighting, but paralysed by conflicting advice and the misfortune, he moved about helplessly on the outskirts of the city, the few attendants and followers deserting him one by one. Among the few who remained loyal to him was his minister Champaka, Kalhana's father, but he sent him away to go to the rescue of his son, Bhoja who, like his father, was also in a tight position. Ultimately Harsa after vainly trying to find refuge in the house of various grandees, took shelter in a mendicant's hut along with his devoted personal attendants, Prayaga and Mukta. Here he learnt of the death of Bhoja at the hands of the enemy forces. Kalhana gives a pathetic account of the last days of the king in his hide-out. But after only two days, his refuge became known and soldiers were sent to capture or kill him. When he saw the hut surrounded he, after sending his cook Mukta away, prepared to fight and sell his life dearly. After a desperate resistance Harsa was slain and his head was carried before Uccala who had it burned while his body, naked like that of a pauper, was cremated by a compassionate wood dealer.

With the death of Harsa we come to the end of the Seventh Book of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini.* The Eighth and the last Book, which forms nearly half of the whole work is a detailed and rather confusing account of Kalhana's contemporary times. Apart from its value as throwing light on the social and economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir then, this account is of little interest to the modern reader. The main events following Harsa's death, however, centre round the two brothers Uccala and Sussala, who being both ambitious to secure the crown engaged themselves in incessant struggles.

Uccala, the elder brother, however, succeeded in the race to the throne of Kashmir, but his position at the time of accession was precarious. The Damaras with whose help and power he defeated and killed Harsa, were all powerful and behaved as true rulers of the land. In order to secure safety, he ceded Lohara territory as an independent chiefship to Sussala, his younger brother. To break the power of the

Damara lords, he resorted to Machiavellian tactics, setting one against the other. Thus weakened, they were easily overcome and their disarmament was effected with the use of minimum force. Uccala was a capable ruler and fairly energetic. To win the sympathy of the people in general, he ruthlessly punished the unpopular Kayasthas or clerks and petty officials. He also seems to have been a just and shrewd ruler and a few anecdotes given by Kalhana illustrate this characteristic of the king. But he had his defects too. He was of jealous disposition and would not tolerate personal merits in others. He had a harsh tongue and temper which slowly alienated from him the support and loyalty of his followers.

Uccala's respite from troubles did not last long. His brother, Sussala, not content with the chiefship of a small hill state, led an attack on Kashmir, but Uccala being alert defeated him easily and he had to flee to the Dard country wherefrom he regained his own hills with very great difficulty.

But a great danger to Uccala's throne was growing from another quarter. Bhoja's young son, Bhiksacara, had been spared by Uccala who brought him up in his court. But having excited the king's suspicions he fled in 1045 and was given shelter by king Naravarman of Malwa.

Meanwhile Uccala effected a reconciliation with his brother Sussala, to whom a son, Jayasimha, was born in the very year of Bhiksacara's escape to Malwa. But Uccala was not destined to live long. Another conspiracy developed under the leadership of the city-prefect Chudda and his brothers who though born in humble circumstances, were ambitious enough to aspire to royal power. They claimed their descent from Yasaskara and joined by discontented officials, attacked the king at night. Uccala though unarmed fought with desperate bravery, but was overpowered by his assailants and cruelly murdered (December 8. 1111 AD).

Utter confusion prevailed in the palace following this ghastly murder, and Radda, a brother of Chudda, whose hands were red with the king's blood, put on the crown, assuming the name of Sankharaja. But he could retain it only for a night, as next morning Gargachandra, leading Damara of Lar district and a trusted supporter of Uccala, attacked the traitors and overpowering them with his forces, avenged his master's death in the blood of Radda and his fellow conspirators.

Finding no suitable successor to Uccala near at hand, Gargachandra, installed Salhana a half-brother of Uccala on the throne. But the new king proved unworthy of the position thrust on him. A weak licentious man, he let the affairs of the State be conducted by Gargachandra.

Meanwhile Sussala learning of his brother's death, set out from Lohara with a small force for Kashmir. Gargachandra met his forces near Bāramula and easily defeated them. Sussala had to flee over the snowcovered pass and could with great difficulty reach back Lohara.

But Gargachandra was not happy with his protege. The latter foolishly connived at a plot to kill Gargachandra which became known to the Damara chief. He thereupon opened negotiations with Sussala. Taking advantage of this favourable opportunity, Sussala again entered the Valley and was soon joined by the forces of the unpopular Salhana, and those of Gargachandra who gave him his daughter in marriage. Sussala marched on to Srinagar without opposition and entered the palace in triumph. Salhana whose reign had not lasted for more than four months, was made prisoner (March, 1112 AD).

Sussala (1112-1120 AD), like his brother, had to face several uprisings and attacks of pretenders. In character also he resembled Uccala and the latter's treacherous murder was a warning to his being alert and ruthless. He naturally took measures to curb the activities of the powerful Damaras and in order to ensure a greater security for himself transferred his treasures to the mountain fastness of Lohara. This made him unpopular and he had to face internal troubles from the rebellious Damaras. Even his father-in-law, Gargachandra turned against him. With his influential relatives who owned large estates in the Valley, Gargachandra raised a dangerous uprising. Sussala had to carry his fortified seats in regular sieges before he could force this feudal lord into submission.

Gaining respite from troubles in the Valley, Sussala went to Lohara, and renewed his friendship with the chiefs of the neighbouring hill tracts.

In the summer of 1120 AD the ring of the rebel forces closed on Srinagar, which Sussala defended with great courage and valour. But soon he found treachery and confusion all around him. He had to contend with Brahmin assemblies who resorting to the holding of solemn fasts, wanted to assume the direction of the affairs of the State. For three months Sussala held out, but ultimately fearing a mutiny among his own troops who could no longer stand the hardships of a long siege, Sussala left the city along with a band of faithful troops. After bribing dangerous opponents on the road to gain a free passage, he ultimately reached Lohara.

On Sussala's departure, the officials and troops in Srinagar made common cause with the Damaras, and Bhiksacara (1120-21 AD) was in

triumph installed as king.

But he was not destined to rule for long. Of a licentious nature, he gave himself up to the pleasures of life and totally neglected the affairs of the State. The Damaras, who had now acquired supreme control over the Valley, were oppressing the people. Rivalries between their chief groups under Prithvihara and Mallakostha, further added to the confusion. The country was in chaos, and trade was at a standstill. Money became scarce and the necessities of life scarcer. "At that time", laments Kalhana, "when the land had no king or rather many kings, the rules of all business broke down manifestly."

In the midst of such troubles, Bhiksacara directed Bimba, his prime minister, to lead an expedition against Lohara, the seat of Sussala. Bimba secured the alliance of Somapala, the chief of Rajauri and aided by a force of "Turuska" or Muhammadan soldiers under Salara Vismaya, launched an attack on Sussala's forces near Poonch. Bimba's Kashmirian soldiers who were thoroughly dissatisfied with Bhiksacara's rule, deserted him and crossed over to Sussala. Bimba had to beat a retreat and Sussala marched to reconquer Kashmir. His return was eagerly awaited by the people by now disillusioned of Bhiksacara and the helpless prince who had no resources failed to appease them. Marching rapidly from Baramula, Sussala appeared suddenly at the gates of Srinagar and unopposed by Bhiksacara once more ascended the throne (May, 1121 AD).

Disheartened and forsaken, Bhiksacara fled across the Pir Panjal Pass to Pusayana under the protection of Prithvihara. There he established his headquarters and slowly gaining some adherents, both he and Prithvihara led a force of Damaras to attack the southern district of the Valley. Having gained military experience and being keen to avenge his defeat, he boldly attacked and defeated the royal troops at Vijayeswara. The victorious Damaras then set fire to the temple where the people of adjoining villages had taken refuge. This act of sacrilege was the turning point in Bhiksacara's fortune, as he became an object of derision and ridicule among the people of the Valley. Although he won several victories against the royal forces during the fight which followed this event, he could not dislodge Sussala, who had meanwhile replaced the Kashmir ministers and troop-leaders suspected of treachery by trusted and reliable people of the Chenab valley.

Bhiksacara's growing skill in conducting a guerilla type of warfare made his Damara friends jealous of him. Apprehending the danger of

his gaining enough power to ultimately suppress them, their attitude towards him became lukewarm. He had therefore to repair to his place of refuge in Pusayana for the winter.

The following year, 1123, brought still greater sufferings for the unfortunate people. In the spring, the rapacious Damara forces again gathered around Srinagar and a prolonged and fierce siege ensued. The communications with the countryside being blocked by the Damaras who also seized the fresh crop, it was impossible to procure any grain stores and thus thousands of lives were lost.

This dealt a heavy blow to the king. Disheartened by the scenes of misery among the people and the death of his beloved queen, he abdicated in favour of his son, Jayasimha, whom he called from the castle of Lohara and crowned king in June 1123 AD. But Sussala soon changed his mind and retained the government in his own hands. He now succeeded in effecting at least an outward pacification of the country, helped no doubt by the rivalries and dissensions prevailing among the leading Damaras. Bhiksacara, however, remained at large under the protection of his Damara allies.

Sussala now plotted to destroy his arch-enemy by assassination and for this purpose made a secret pact with one Utpala, the treacherous agent of the Damara chief, Tikka. It was planned that Utpala, after disposing of Bhiksacara, should kill Tikka as well. Utpala, however, betrayed the king and divulged the plot to Tikka, who advised him to turn the tables on Sussala. While he was holding a secret and intimate meeting with Utpala and a party of conspirators, Sussala was seized by them unawares and mercilessly killed (February, 1128 AD). The stampede and confusion that ensued this ghastly deed, allowed the murderers not only to escape, but to carry off the victim's head as well as his body.

Jayasimha (1128-1155 AD)

The youthful son and successor of Sussala, Jayasimha, heard the news of his father's murder in great sorrow. Surrounded by dangers, with an empty treasury and no army, it seemed impossible for him to hold his own in the city for long. No wonder some of his close associates advised him to flee in the darkness of the night to his stronghold in Lohara.

The conditions prevailing in Kashmir at the time have been graphically described by Kalhana. The Damaras, the feudal landlords, exercised their authority in their districts or even villages, with the arms of

their paid followers, and secure against the attacks of the royal forces in their strongly fortified castles, were carrying on perpetual intrigue against their rivals or the king. Like the Barons of medieval England, they often defied the king's orders and in times of unrest, the royal authority could be asserted only with force.

Taking advantage of a succession of weak rulers and constant rivalries at the court, the Damaras had overwhelmed the kingdom and in the words of Kalhana, "the city was without splendour, the citizens deprived of all means, and the land overrun by numberless Damaras who were like kings." Sussala's 16 years of rule were passed in a relentless struggle against these haughty barons, but all his efforts failed to crush their power. Roads were unsafe for travel, fields were left uncultivated by the harassed peasantry and famine and misery ruled the land. Loot and arson followed each attack and counterattack on cities and towns by the followers of the contending claimants to the throne.

To add to Jayasimha's fears and apprehensions, there was the imminent danger from the arch-enemy of the family, Bhiksacara, who was encamped a few marches away from Srinagar.

Jayasimha, however, did not lose heart. To win the sympathy and support of the citizens of Srinagar as well as the vacillating soldiers, he proclaimed a general amnesty. Luck also favoured him at this critical moment. A heavy snowfall during the night prevented Bhiksacara to rapidly march on Srinagar. Meanwhile, the forces of Panchachandra, son of Gargachandra, the powerful Damara leader, whose help he had sought, joined the royal troops. The loyal elements and supporters of Sussala when they heard of his murder hurried to the aid of Jayasimha, and in the battle that ensued, Bhiksacara was defeated, his Damara followers deserting him one by one.

Jayasimha thus ascended the throne in the midst of an open rebellion, when the land was still suffering from many wounds caused by the preceding struggles. Having been freed from the immediate danger to his throne, he set himself to the task of extending his authority over the Valley. For this he relied upon cunning diplomacy and unscrupulous intrigue, in which his prime minister Lakshmaka took a leading part. Utpala, the murderer of Sussala, was captured and executed. Soon he succeeded in winning over most of the enemies of Sussala. But in the following year, Bhiksacara returned to create fresh trouble for the king. However, the measures taken against him by Sujji, Jayasimha's able commander-in-chief, threw the pretender's forces into confusion and he was once more forced to retire. Sujji, however, was the victim

of Lakshmaka's intrigue and he fled along with his loyal followers across the frontiers of the Valley and opened negotiations with Bhiksacara. The latter again marched into the Valley, but Lakshmaka's forces discomfited him, and he had to seek shelter in the fortified town of Banasila (present Banihal), where the Khasha chief betrayed him. Deserted by his Damara followers, the unfortunate pretender was apprehended and died fighting the soldiers who had been sent for his capture.

Almost immediately there arose a new rival. Lothana, a half brother of Uccala, helped by elements disloyal to Jayasimha, was set free from his prison in Lohara. He crowned himself the ruler of that district and captured all the treasures which Sussala had accumulated in that mountain fortress. With the help of this and the disgruntled and disloyal officials and commanders of Jayasimha, he raised a force and prepared to defend his newly-won freedom and power against the forces of Jayasimha. Realising the danger from the loss of his family stronghold, the latter despatched a considerable force under Lakshmaka across the mountains to retake it.

Lakshmaka endeavoured to reduce the hill-fortress by a blockade. But this proved fruitless and when his forces were being decimated by the summer fevers of that place and Sujji, his personal enemy, was advancing at the head of his troops from Rajauri, Lakshmaka raised the siege and beat a retreat which soon turned into a rout. Lakshmaka was captured and it is recorded that among the Kashmirian soldiers who were able to escape, thousands died of the fever which they had contracted during this expedition. Lakshmaka was later ransomed from the chief of Rajauri. On his return to Kashmir he resumed his position as chief minister of Jayasimha.

Lothana who had by this victory consolidated his position at Lohara employed Sujji as his commander-in-chief. But where military valour did not succeed, Jayashimha's intrigues against him began to bear fruit. Lothana was soon deposed by a half-brother of Jayasimha, named Mallarjuna, who had been kept as a prisoner at Lohara. Mallarjuna was a weak ruler given to the pleasures of life and could not stand the forces of Jayasimha who forced him to pay tribute. But the feuds between the new chief, Mallarjuna, and Lothana continued, and profiting by this a Damara lord, Kosthesvara, made himself virtually the master of Lohara. When, therefore, Jayasimha won over this Damara chief, as well as Sujji whom he reinstated in his office and deputed against Mallarjuna, the latter had to abandon the stronghold and flee to Rajauri. Here he was ultimately captured in 1135 AD. Soon after,

Kosthesvara was also secured and safely imprisoned in Srinagar. Sujji too, did not enjoy long the confidence of the king. Intrigues were hatched against him and he was treacherously murdered together with his relatives and followers.

Having secured peace from his rivals to the throne and also the suppression to some extent of the Damaras, Jayasimha attempted to extend his influence in territories bordering on the Valley. He tried to profit by the troubles which had broken out among his Dard neighbours at the death of their ruler Yasodhara. But instead of gaining any advantage there, the Dards under Viddasiha the new chief, created trouble for Jayasimha in return. Lothana who was living as a refugee in the Dard territory was encouraged to raise a rebellion again and with the help of a powerful Damara chief of the Kishenganga valley, Alankarachakra, he succeeded in spreading unrest in that strategic area. Jayasimha sent a powerful army and laid siege to the stronghold of the Damara lord. After the siege had continued for some time, the defenders ran short of food and water and Alankarachakra was forced to deliver up Lothana and Vigraha-raja, another pretender, to Jayasimha (1144 AD).

A fresh incursion into Kashmir by the Dard tribes, under Bhoja, another pretender to the Kashmir throne, was defeated and pushed back by Jayasimha's forces in a battle fought on the banks of the Wular Lake. Simultaneously a fresh rebellion of a few Damara lords in the south of the Valley, was crushed by Rilhana, who had succeeded Sujji as the commander-in-chief of Jayasimha's forces. The king also succeeded in securing the surrender of the pretender, Bhoja, who appears to have later gained the confidence of the king.

Finding that there was now no pretender on the scene, whom they could use as a tool, the Damaras were demoralised and were disarmed and subdued one by one. The peace thus established in the much harassed land, enabled Jayasimha to make some pious foundations. But though Kalhana gives a long list of the these, it appears that they were only in the nature of restorations of temples and towns which had suffered damage during the preceding decades of unrest and chaos.

With a mention of the members of Jayasimha's family and the matrimonial alliances he contracted with the ruling families of neighbouring hill states, Kalhana closes his monumental work, bringing down the history to the 22nd year of Jayasimha's reign (1149-50 AD). From Jonaraja's brief account of the concluding years of the king's life we learn that Jayasimha ruled for five years longer, during which he

undertook a successful expedition against 'Yavana' Turuskas, who, however, cannot be identified.

For the history of the remaining period of the Hindu rule we have to depend upon the account furnished by Jonaraja who wrote in 1459 AD. It is only an outline, in contrast to Kalhana's exhaustive and detailed account of the rule of his contemporary kings.

Jayasimha was succeeded by his son Paramanudeva, who during his rule of ten years was mainly concerned with filling up his treasury with the assistance of two officials, Prayaga and Janaka. The inscriptions on the foundations of the temple unearthed at Tapar, mention its erection by this king and the extensive dimensions of the ruins corroborate the statement about his affluence.

His son Vantideva succeeded him to the throne at his death in 1164 AD and after an uneventful rule of seven years, died in 1171 AD. With his death, the Lohara dynasty came to an end for want of an heir.

The deterioration in the social and moral condition of the people following the long centuries of misrule and oppression, can be gauged by the fact that when the nobles assembled to choose a successor to the vacant throne, they could find no better person to be installed as king than one Upyadeva who was, says the Chronicler, "the very model of a dunce. Once this foolish king felt happy at the sight of large blocks of stone, and he ordered his ministers to increase the size of smaller ones by making them drink the milk of beasts."[4]

After his death in c. 1180 AD, his brother, Jassaka, who was a greater fool, wore the crown. This enabled the Damara Lavanyas, the overbearing barons, to flout the royal authority with ease and indulge in acts of brigandage. In fact, Jassaka, who was not keen to occupy the throne, was retained there by these rapacious landlords who thus got a golden opportunity to exploit the land. Two clever Brahmin brothers named Kshuksa and Bhima, fishing in troubled waters, secured for themselves positions of power and it was only the fear of the Damara barons which prevented them from capturing the throne.

Jassaka's rule of 18 years ended with his death in 1198 AD. Jagadeva who succeeded him seems to have been an enlightened despot, who tried to rid the land of the ravages of the Damaras and give the people a clean administration. The Kayastha officials who naturally disliked his policy of reform, rose in a body and with the help of the powerful barons forced the king to quit the Valley. Jagadeva, however, regained

4. Jonaraja; *Dvitiya Rajatarangini*, (ed. Peterson), 30 sqq.

the throne with the help and advice of his faithful minister, Gunakararahula, but after a shaky rule of over 14 years, he died in 1212 AD of poison administered to him by Padma, the 'Lord of Marches'.

There followed a civil war again. Rajadeva, the son of Jagadeva, who had fled to Kishtwar on the death of his father, was soon brought back to the Valley by the enemies of Padma. While Rajadeva was undergoing a siege in a fort laid by the forces of Padma, the latter was suddenly killed by a Chandala and Rajadeva was annointed as the king by the Bhatts or Brahmin corporation. But later suspecting them of an intrigue against him, Rajadeva ordered a general plunder of the community and "then was heard from among them the cry *Na Bhattoham* (I am not a Bhatta)."[5]

But this did not bring him peace. The royal authority was seriously threatened by the Lavanya barons and one of them, Baladyachandra, occupied half of Srinagar, the king failing in dislodging him even from there. After a disturbed and inglorious rule of about 22 years Rajadeva died in 1235 AD.

The throne then passed to his son Samgramadeva. He was a strong prince but his determination to crush the power of the barons was frustrated by the activities of his brother Surya, who fleeing from the court raised a rebellion with the help of the barons were overcome, but meanwhile the troubles gave an opportunity to the Brahmins under the leadership of the sons of Kalhana, to assert themselves and become powerful again. They forced the king to retire and take shelter with the chief of Rajauri. Then followed a period of total anarchy with the Damaras 'sucking the very life-blood of the people.' For how long this anarchy remained is not known, but ultimately Samgramadeva succeeded in defeating his adversaries and regaining the throne. He was not, however, destined to rule long. Kalhana's sons, whom he had desisted from killing because they were Brahmins, hatching a plot against him, murdered him in cold blood in 1252 AD. Saka, a learned poet, is said to have composed a poem with Samgramadeva as its hero, which was, "like the necklace, an ornament of the learned." But the work is not now traceable.

Samgramadeva was succeeded by his son, Ramadeva, whose first act as king was to avenge Samgramadeva's death by killing his murderers. He seems to have been an able administrator and governed the kingdom successfully with the help of his able minister, Prithviraj. His

5. Ibid., 79-91.

queen, Samudra, built a *matha* at Srinagar, on the banks of the Vitasta which was marked with her name, and the king himself repaired the Visnu temple of Utpalapura.

The king had no issue and adopted Lakshmanadeva a boy of Bhisyakapura, who succeeded him on his death in 1273 AD Lakshmanadeva was a learned man "filled with the love of the six branches of learning." But he did not have the vigour and courage of a Kshatriya and was defeated and killed by a Turuska (Turkish Muhammadan) named Kajjala in c. 1286 AD.

His death seems to have resulted in a period of anarchy. Two figures, Samgramachandra the Damara lord of Lar and Simhadeva, the baron of Dakhinpara Parganas, appear as dominating the scene. The latter declared himself the king of Kashmir but his authority was at every step contested by Samgramachandra. It was only after the latter's death that Simhadeva was able to occupy the kingdom. He made a number of religious foundations which, taking into account the depleted condition of the treasury, do not seem to have been either extensive or substantial. During the later years of his life, he veered towards agnosticism and met his death as a result of his intrigue with the daughter of his nurse (1301 AD).

Sahadeva (1301-1320), his brother, who succeeded him on his death, established his authority with the help of his minister Ramachandra. He led expeditions to such distant places outside the Valley as Panjgabhar on the east of Rajauri and brought the territory under his sway. Sahadeva's rule is notable for his giving shelter to two adventurers from abroad — Shahmira from Swat and Rinchin from Tibet — which ultimately resulted in the overthrow of Hindu rule in Kashmir and its replacement by the Muslim kings of the Shahmiri dynasty.

The Final Phase

The history of medieval Kashmir, though sad, is remarkable in many ways. A glorious period of Kashmir's history almost ended with the reign of Avantivarman (855-83 AD). Earlier, the conquests of Lalitaditya (624-61 AD) and Jayapida (776-817 AD) led to an influx of wealth into the country which resulted in contentment and prosperity. The enlightened rule of Avantivarman consolidated these gains further and increased the material prosperity of the people, and this led to an upsurge in art, philosophy and literature. But this ease and plenty carried with it the germs of decay. Thus after Avantivarman's

reign, incessant feuds, civil wars and upheavals became rampant. Death, famine and pestilence stalked the land. There were feudal wars between the kings and the Damaras and Lavanyas; temples were destroyed, cities and towns were burnt; crops were damaged and there was murder and loot. There were also popular risings; court intrigues and assassinations; and kings were installed and dethroned in quick succession.

A state divided against itself and resting on a shattered economy could not be expected to maintain the large territories annexed to it during the period of the early Karkotas. Pressed on all sides by the warlike tribes, the boundaries of the kingdom got shrunk, until the imbecile kings were content to rule over the precincts of the Valley alone, and sometimes even less. The Kabul valley, Rajauri and Poonch, Kangra and Jammu, Kishtwar and Ladakh had, one by one, thrown off their allegiance to the kings of Kashmir and became independent principalities. In mocking contrast to the power and prestige of the Karkotas, these petty chieftains now found opportunities to interfere directly in the affairs of the Valley, and even carry out, with impunity, marauding expeditions thereto. To fight their rivals, many Kashmir kings recruited soldiers from amongst the people of these principalities.

Kashmir, therefore, fell a prey to adventurers who made many attempts to reduce the Valley. But in times of such emergency, the people of Kashmir forgot their differences and rose to defend their country and for more than three centuries they withstood the onslaughts of many outside foes.

By the beginning of the 13th century AD, Islam had made considerable progress in northern India and Central Asia, and though Kashmir had successfully withstood the attacks of Muslim conquerors like Ghazni, it was being gradually influenced by the preachings of numerous Islamic teachers. By the time Sahadeva (1301-20 AD) ascended the throne of Kashmir, a fair proportion of the people had already accepted Islam.

A stirring drama of intrigue, rebellion and war lasting for 20 years (1318-38 AD) was enacted, and finally Muslim rule was established in Kashmir. The dominating personality during all these years was Queen Kota — a woman with an unbounded lust for power.

Sahadeva who was a weak-minded king was fortunate in having an able and kind-hearted prime minister and commander-in-chief, by name Ramachandra. He virtually ruled the land. He carried out his duties faithfully and tried to conserve the slender resources of the

kingdom and maintain a semblance of ordered government of the country. He was ably assisted by his beautiful and intelligent daughter, Kota. But the overbearing barons, known as Kota (castle)Rajas, protected by their castles and holding rich tracts of land, consistently flouted his authority. In these circumstances, the king always looked out for aid.

At this time a fugitive prince named Rinchin came to Kashmir from Tibet with a following of several hundred armed men. There had been a civil war in Tibet and the Kalmanya Bhuteas had treacherously killed the ruler of western Tibet along with his relations and friends. Rinchin, who was a prince of the royal line, however, escaped a similar fate. Collecting all the scattered forces, he dealt several heavy blows to his enemies, but being outnumbered he was forced to flee. He crossed the Zoji-la and sought Ramachandra's protection. As Ramachandra was badly in need of an ally, he readily took Rinchin and his followers into his service. Kota, who managed her father's affairs thus came into close contact with the prince who helped her in her untiring efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people. They also helped Ramachandra in consolidating the power of the king.

They were joined by another protege of Ramachandra, Shah Mir. He was a Muslim adventurer from Swat and in pursuance of a dream in which he had been told by a holy man that he would succeed to the throne of Kashmir, he had come to the Valley "together with his relatives. The king of Kashmir greatly favoured him by giving him a salary, even as the mango tree favours the black-bees."

But at this time Kashmir was attacked by Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Central Asia. Instead of opposing the enemy, Sahadeva fled to Kishtwar leaving Ramachandra to manage the affairs of the State. Impoverishing the Valley during a stay of eight months, Dulchu finding that provisions were scarce, tried to return through the passes leading to the plains of India. But he could not escape nature's wrath. Caught in a snow storm, he perished together with thousands of prisoners he had taken. Then the Gaddis from Kishtwar led a marauding expedition into the Valley but were driven back by Ramachandra who now assumed the title of king.

Pitiable was the condition of the people at this time. Laments the Chronicler. "When Dulchu had left the place, those people of Kashmir who had escaped capture, issued out of their strongholds, as mice do out of their holes. When the violence caused by the Rakshasa Dulchu ceased, the son found not his father nor the father his son, nor

did brother meet his brother. Kashmir became almost like a region before the creation, a vast field with men without food and full of grass."[6]

During these dark days Kota played a prominent part in organising resistance to the enemy. After her father assumed the formal kingship of Kashmir, she did her utmost to give succour and relief to the afflicted people. Rinchin had already gained popularity among the Kashmiris as a result of the prominent part he had played against the enemy.

Rinchin in his turn became ambitious and he grew envious of Ramachandra's accession to the throne. At an opportune moment his followers rose in revolt and took the royal army by surprise. Ramachandra managed to escape and the capital fell into the hands of Rinchin without much difficulty. Ramachandra and his daughter Kota took refuge in the strong fort of Lahara (Lar Pargana) where he began to reorganise his forces for battle against Rinchin.

But he had to content with a foe who was at once brave and crafty. Realising that he had little chance against Ramachandra in open combat, Rinchin resorted to a mean stratagem. He sent his Tibetan followers into the inner precincts of the Lahara fortress disguised as simple pedlars but with arms concealed under their long robes. When all suspicion had been removed, his men attacked Ramachandra's quarter and murdered him in cold blood before his guards could come to his help. Simultaneously Rinchin's forces launched an assault on the fort and encountering no resistance, planted their flag on its ramparts.

Rinchin now became the undisputed master of Kashmir. But, he realised that through his base action he had forfeited Kota's love. Thereupon he set himself to the task of courting her. He gained the goodwill of her brother whom he appointed as his minister. At last her grief was assuaged.

Rinchin still followed the Lamaist religion. But Kota Rani urged him to adopt Hinduism. However, he failed to get into the Hindu fold and embraced Islam. He thus became the first Muslim king of Kashmir.

Rinchin, with the help of his queen, Kota Rani, wisely and justly conducted the affairs of State. He broke the power of the feudal barons, introduced order and discipline to his disgruntled and disorganised army and reorganised the administrative machinery. He was faithfully served by his minister, Shah Mir, a fellow refugee who had taken service under Ramachandra. Shah Mir was also gaining popularity

6. Jonaraja, Ibid, 152-155.

among the Kashmiris because of his abilities and his sympathy with and understanding of the grievances of the people.

Though Rinchin succeeded in a large measure in subduing his opponents, he could not escape the machinations of his enemies abroad. Sahadeva's brother, Udyanadeva, had also fled the country at the time of Dulchu's invasion. He had taken refuge with the chief of Gandhara. Enraged at Rinchin's usurpation of the throne, he organised a rising in Kashmir under a powerful baron by name Tukka. The rebels launched an attack on the king's palace. In the skirmish that followed, Rinchin received a strong blow on the head as a result of which he fainted. Believing him to be dead the unruly elements spread disorder in the city, but Rinchin regained his consciousness and chased the enemy away. He inflicted severe punishment on all those who had taken part in the uprising and generously rewarded those who had remained loyal.

But his wounds became worse despite all possible treatment and care. Knowing that his end was near, he entrusted his son, Haider, and his queen, Kota Rani, to the care of his faithful minister, Shah Mir. He died in 1320 AD, after having ruled for three years.

Kashmir was again thrown into disorder. Though Rinchin had given the semblance of peace, he had not succeeded in completely suppressing the disorderly elements which raised their head again after his death. Kota Rani realised that she could not hold the country with her slender resources. Therefore, when Udyanadeva was advancing upon Kashmir with a strong force, she offered him the throne as well as her person, waiving the claims of her son, Haider. Udyanadeva on ascending the gaddi married Kota Rani with great pomp.

By her charm, beauty and intelligence, Kota Rani quickly gained ascendency over the king, whom she, in a short time, relegated to the background. From now onwards she was the virtual ruler of the kingdom.

Kota Rani — The Last Hindu Ruler

It was at this time that Kashmir was threatened with an invasion by Achala. Udyanadeva like his brother Sahadeva, sought safety in flight. But Kota Rani decided to resist the invader. She mustered together all the available forces, and warned the people that if they did not rise to the occasion, a worse fate than that which befell them at Dulchu's hands would overtake them now. Encouraged by her undaunted courage and forgetting all their differences at the approach of common

danger, they flocked under her banner. She organised a strong resistance and Shah Mir remained loyal to her. Kota Rani realising her shortcomings against Achala, took recourse to diplomacy. Feigning submission, she sent word to him that as the throne of Kashmir had fallen vacant due to the king's flight, she and her ministers would install him on the throne provided his army withdrew. Achala, blinded by greed, believed her and keeping only a small detachment with him in Kashmir, sent the rest of his troops back to their home. Then Kota broke her word, attacked and destroyed the detachment and capturing Achala, had him beheaded. At once Kota became the idol of the people. Learning of Kota Rani's success against the invader, Udyanadeva returned to the capital and notwithstanding his betrayal of the country at a critical moment, "Kota respectfully received him with her head bent down, even as the eastern hill received the gloom-dispelling full moon on its head."

Kota Rani was now the undisputed master of the kingdom. She held her court personally, dispensed justice, appointed and dismissed her ministers. But with all her qualities of a born ruler, she could not stop the rot that had already worked deep into the body-politic of Kashmir. Powerful factions were constantly intriguing against her. Often she had to resort to force to curb her rebellious ministers and warlords. Once while leading a force against her turbulent commander-in-chief, she was skilfully manoeuvred into a fortress, captured and imprisoned. It was, however, the sagacity and shrewdness of one of her loyal ministers, Kumara Bhatta, that secured her freedom. Reaching her capital she organised a stronger force with which she finally defeated her rebel commander.

All this time Shah Mir was cleverly taking stock of the situation. Being a shrewd politician, he was biding his time to seize the throne without raising any opposition from the people or the powerful barons. He had already endeared himself to the people by his bravery during Dulchu's and Achala's invasions. He had won the esteem and trust of the queen by his loyalty. Being the guardian of her son, Haider, he proved to be a terror to Udyanadeva and "frightened the king day and night by holding up the boy before him, even as one frightens a bird by holding up his hawk". He established alliances with the barons through the marriage of his children and grand-children into their families. With the help of these powerful relations he took possession of large estates which he controlled without any interference from the king or the queen. With a steady eye on his goal, he had been consolidating his position and bided his time.

These actions roused the suspicions of Kota Rani who had planned to continue in power even after her husband's death. She had appointed a clever and astute politician, Bikhsana Bhatta, as her second minister and had entrusted to him the guardianship of her son by Udyanadeva.

While these intrigues and counter-intrigues were going on, King Udyanadeva died on the Shivratri night in 1338 AD.

Fearing an open revolt by Shah Mir and his relations, Kota Rani kept the death of her husband a secret for four days. During this interval she made quick but efficient arrangements for the protection of her kingdom and, in order to checkmate Shah Mir, she publicly disowned her son, Haider, who had been brought up by Shah Mir and who, she feared, might be proclaimed king. Having at first won the loyalty of the powerful Lavanya tribe, she ascended the throne. Shah Mir and others, finding their plans thwarted, "bowed to her as to the crescent of the moon".

But she enjoyed no peace although she did her best to please her subjects by "bestowing much wealth on them". She was afraid of Shah Mir who was her rival to the throne. She, therefore bestowed honours on Bikhsana Bhatta.

Shah Mir, however, was not slow in perceiving the queen's designs. He realised that, as a first step to power, he had to remove Bikhsana who was the mainstay of her power. He, therefore, took recourse to a base stratagem.

Shah Mir pretended to be very ill and had it known that his end was near. Kota Rani sent Bikhsana Bhatta to enquire about his health. When he arrived at his residence followed by his bodyguard, Shah Mir's servants engaged Bikhsana's followers in conversation and Bikhsana, unattended, was conducted into the 'patient's' room. Shah Mir at first complained, spoke of his illness and then suddenly jumped out of his bed and with his sword killed Bikhsana. When the news of this treacherous deed reached Kota Rani she was enraged, but was dissuaded by her ministers from seeking revenge.

From then on, Shah Mir gained in prestige. Only after five months of her accession to the throne, an insurrection broke out in the Kamraj district and the queen went to the chief town and fortress of the district, Jayapura (modern Andarkot), to direct operations personally. No sooner had she left Srinagar than Shah Mir at the head of a strong contingent of his followers captured the city and proclaimed himself king. The Lavanyas quickly organised themselves into a force and

launched a strong attack on his followers. Kota Rani learning of Shah Mir's rebellion also mustered a strong army at Jayapura.

For a month there raged a fierce and sanguinary battle between the forces of Shah Mir and the Lavanya tribe. Shah Mir was hard pressed and step by step was being driven out of the city. He sent emissaries to his feudal relatives and implored them for help. When victory was in sight for the Lavanyas, the forces of Lutsa, the Lord of the Marches and a relation of Shah Mir, attacked them from the rear. Shah Mir also launched a strong counter offensive from the front, and thus surrounded the Lavanyas. Elated at this victory, Shah Mir threw open the doors of the treasury and handsomely rewarded those who had stood by him. Learning of this sudden turn in the battle, Kota Rani ordered the gates of the fort of Jayapura to be shut and made preparations for facing a long siege.

The fort was situated in the middle of a lake. The town was on the shore of the lake opposite the fort. Both could therefore be held by even a small garrison against a large army. And in the case of Shah Mir a long siege was fatal, since his position was contested from all sides. Being a shrewd politician, he realised that the conflict had to end in a short time.

He knew Kota Rani's weakness for power. It was for power that she had married Rinchin, the murderer of her father; for power she had disowned her son; and for power she had remarried Udyanadeva.

With her brave followers, the Lavanyas, defeated and herself surrounded by the powerful forces of Shah Mir, Kota Rani fell a victim to Shah Mir's assiduity and surrendered on the explicit condition that she would share the bed and the throne with him. And so Shah Mir "took possession of the *kota* (castle) and of queen Kota".

After coming under his power she realised that she would not get a fair deal. Shorn of her dignity, she seemed destined to be a forgotten and forlorn woman. Shah Mir, sent word to her to present herself before him. Clad in the richest costume and wearing her most precious ornaments, she entered his bed chamber. Triumphantly Shah Mir approached her, but before he could draw her into his arms, Kota Rani had stabbed herself to death.

Thus ended the life of one of the most romantic figures in the history of Kashmir. There can be no two opinions about the character and abilities of this remarkable woman. That she was a born diplomat nobody can deny. It was due to her clever moves that Achala was killed and his invasion halted. Considering the ferocious nature of the feudal

landlords of her time and the indiscipline among her troops, it required all her intelligence, force of character and administrative ability to govern the kingdom so well. She was a source of inspiration to Rinchin and later to Udyanadeva. But at the same time we cannot ignore her fickle-minded policies and her divided loyalties at a time when the fortunes of the kingdom stood at crossroads.

Hindu Rule-An Appraisal

With Kota Rani's death we come to the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir. It is not difficult to account for its fall. During the latter half of the ninth century and onwards, the rulers of Kashmir adopted a policy of strict isolation of the Valley from the rest of India. It was no doubt dictated by the rise of Islamic power in north-west India and although Kashmir preserved its independence, protected by its inaccessible mountain barriers, the people had to pay a heavy price for it in their long sufferings and pitiless oppression. For, the one striking fact about the history of Kashmir is that its people rose to great heights of art, culture and economic prosperity when it received the impulses from outside rather than from within — from India direct, from Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scytheans. Asoka's sovereign power extended to Kashmir and the results of its influence may be seen to this day in the remains of Buddhist temples and statues and of the city founded by him 250 years before Christ. The great emperor had established a friendly intercourse with Greece and Egypt and it is to this connection that we owe the splendid stone architecture and sculpture of Kashmir.

The next landmark is the reign of Kaniska, whose territories extended from Central Asia to Bengal. Renowned throughout the Buddhist world as the pious king who held the Buddhist Council in Kashmir, the contacts established under his rule with outside world and the rise of Mahayana resulted in intense cultural and religious activity of the people of Kashmir whose sons carried the doctrine to distant places in Central Asia ad China.

And so also during the days of Lalitaditya and his immediate successors, when though the tide of political influence and conquest was turned, Kashmir was brought in close contact with the rest of India. The only difference was that instead of more advanced and powerful races from India spreading their influence over Kashmir, it was from Kashmir that conquerors were to go forth over neighbouring districts of the Punjab and northern and western India. Lalitaditya is the most conspicuous figure in the early history of Kashmir and raised

his country to a pitch of glory it had never reached before. His grandson also carried on in his footsteps, but a succession of weak rulers resulted in the fall of the dynasty and its empire. Under Avantivarman, we witness a period of consolidation and though his son Samkaravarman tried to emulate the great deeds of Karkota kings, he met with dismal failure. This was the last outward effort of the Kashmir rulers who, to save their small kingdom form conquest by the new Muslim kings of North India, sealed the passes and behind the protecting walls of high mountains reduced the people of Kashmir to the plight of a beleaguered garrison.

But the resources of the small kingdom were too poor to maintain a large population. Connections with the centres of trade and commerce in India being severed, the pressure on agricultural land increased, resulting in the emergence of powerful landlords. Kashmir thus presents the picture of a besieged fortress which when its provisions get exhausted becomes the scene of unrest and mutiny among the garrison itself.

So we find the frustrated rulers of Kashmir with their traditions of splendour and power taking recourse to the imposition of numerous taxes and exactions to meet the expenses of a pompous court and a large standing army. And when even this proved insufficient they turned their attention to temples and their endowments, sparing not even the sacred gold, silver and copper statues of gods and goddesses which they melted for purposes of coinage. The kingdom thus fell into a vicious circle. The masses being reduced to poverty the State revenues dwindled, resulting in fresh taxation and more misery. The soldiers deserted the king's army and took service under the powerful barons or organised themselves into bands of armed condottiere offering their services to one or the other of the numerous claimants to the throne.

No wonder we witness intrigues, rebellions, murders and quick successions of kings. The fate of the kingdom was dependent upon the character of the sovereign and there was little of political consciousness among the people. They patiently endured the despotic whims of the ruler and although we find many rebellions taking place, these were mostly raised by feudal landlords for their class interests.

Added to the instability of the administration was the evil influence of the harem on the king and his court. The incredible sensuality of the kings and queens which brought untold sufferings upon the State, throws a lurid light on the manners and customs of the age and gives a rude shock to the fond illusion of benevolent despotism of our ancient rulers. Similarly, we find a lack of character among the officials. Among

the crowd of those painted by Kalhana, we rarely come across one who showed steadfast loyalty, stern morality, a deep sense of duty or even an appreciation of ordinary moral rules.

While this sad drama was being enacted in the close confines of Kashmir, Islam was entrenching itself in north-west India and in spite of its seclusion and closure of its passes, the new ideas were imperceptibly penetrating into the Valley. By the beginning of the twelfth century AD, Islam was slowly accepted by the harassed people. It is not therefore surprising that Shah Mir had local supporters and could ascend the throne and hold it without the aid of an outside army or ally.

This is another illustration of a unique characteristic of the people of Kashmir. In the course of their long history they have practically demonstrated their religious tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. When for instance Naga worship was replaced by the early Brahmanical religion which later gave place to Buddhism, there was the least tinge of violence or ill-feeling. And when finally Buddhism was again supplanted by the reformed Brahmanical creed, the change was brought about imperceptibly and without any outburst of violence. In fact we find kings, queens and courtiers not only building and endowing Hindu temples and Buddhist *viharas* and *chaityas*, but worshipping in all. Saivism and Vaisnavism flourished side by side, and received equal homage from the king and the commoner. And so also Islam which entered the Valley imperceptibly did not meet with violent opposition. For two centuries after the accession of the first Muslim king to the throne of Kashmir, the administration was carried on by the traditional Brahman class with Sanskrit as the court language.

Another notable feature of Kashmir history is the administrative ability displayed by the queens, though unfortunately in most cases it is accompanied by dissolute character, still the careers of Sugandha, Didda, Suryamati and Kota and a host of minor ones, throw interesting light on the opportunities afforded to women to take effective part in public life. There are examples of justice and good administration. The benevolent and peaceful reigns of kings like Chandrapida, Avantivarman and Yasaskara show the value placed by the kings on high morals, truth and selfless service to the people placed in their care.

But Kashmir was generally unfortunate in its rulers and the people had to endure unspeakable miseries at the hands of several tyrants. Kalhana presents gruesome pictures of kings and queens who gloried in shameless lust, fiendish cruelty and pitiless misrule. But although in political development and barbarous cruelty the people of Kashmir may

very well be likened to the Europeans in the Middle Ages, still, in refinement, culture and all that go to make up civilizations, they were in a far more advanced stage. Learning flourished and was very much appreciated in the Kingdom. Fine arts like music and dance were cultivated by the king and people alike. Art and architecture greatly prospered, and even the worst kings and their officials continued the pious practice of building temples and monasteries. In religion and philosophy, Kashmir showed remarkable progress and evolved a new school of Saivism, whose humanity and rationality is in contrast to the dogma and philosophy of many Saiva sects that preceded it.

6

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Stirring but sad though it reads, the political history of Kashmir from early times to the middle of the 14th century AD yet appears airy and unreal. In the absence of information on the life and condition of the people who inhabited the kingdom during these centuries, and who were affected by, and in turn determined, the course of history, the narration of the activities of kings and queens and of their court, reads like a fairytale. Unfortunately very little data is available on this important aspect of history. We have to fall back upon the few references to, and sidelights thrown on, the social and economic condition of the people by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. The *Nilamatpurana* and the works of Kshemendra and Jonaraja are also helpful. After carefully joining together the scanty material that we have at our disposal, it is possible to give only a broad outline of the life of the people who passed to and fro over this beautiful land in ancient times.

Political Geography

The extent of the area of Kashmir that will be covered by this survey, will naturally be confined to the Valley proper. For, though at times the kingdom extended to as far as Kanauj in the south and Tibet in the north, our information is neither detailed nor authentic about these places. There was, of course, a close resemblance to political institutions, social classes, military organisation and trade and commerce prevailing in the rest of India, of which Kashmir from ancient times was a part; yet since the information vouchsafed us by Kalhana and other authors is limited to the Valley proper we have perforce to content ourselves with its narrow geographical limits. It will therefore be useful to give a brief notice of the territories which lay beyond the confines of the Valley and which formed its neighbours during the Hindu times.

Beginning in the south-east we have the valley of Kashtvatta, the present Kishtwar, on the upper Chenab. It is mentioned by Kalhana as a separate hill state in the times of Kalasa.[1] Its rajas who were Hindu till Aurangzeb's time, practically retained their independence up to the beginning of the 19th century. The hill district of Bhadrawah lower down on the Chenab had also its rajas who were till recent times tributary to Chamba.

The rajas of Chamba, ancient Champa, figure often in the Kashmir Chronicles. Their territory has since early times comprised the valleys of the sources of the Ravi between Kangra, the ancient Trigarta, and Kashtvata. The ancient Rajput family which ruled this hill state often intermarried with the Lohara dynasty which reigned in Kashmir.[2]

To the west of Chamba lay the old chiefship of Vallapura, modern Bilawar. Its rulers are repeatedly referred to in Kalhana's narrative. They retained their independence as petty hill chiefs till the rise of Gulab Singh in the 19th century.

Of the political organisation of the territory between Vallapura in the south-east and Rajauri in the north-west, there is no distinct information. The inhabitants of this region are the Dogras, a name traditionally derived from Dvigarta.

Immediately at the foot of the Banihal pass is the territory known in ancient times as Visalata. Temporarily these hill states acknowledged the suzerainty of Kashmir, but during the greater part of the period they appear to have held their own and rather to have obtained subsidies from the Kashmir rulers.[3]

Some of these petty hill states were perhaps included in the territories known as Darvabhisara, comprising the whole tract of the lower and middle hills between the Jhelum and the Chenab. The combined names of the Darvas and Abhisaras are found already in the ethnographical lists of the *Mahabharata* and *Brihatsamhita.* A chief of this region figures under the ethnic name of Abhisares in the accounts of Alexander's Indian campaign.

The most important of the hill states in this region is Rajapuri, modern Rajauri. Owing to its position on the direct route to the Punjab, Rajauri was necessarily often brought into political relations with

1. *Raj.*, vii-590.
2. Ibid. vii-218.
3. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol, II, p. 432.

Kashmir. Heun Tsiang mentions this hill state to be a part of the territories of the Kashmir king in his time. From the tenth century onwards we find the rajas of this principality practically independent rulers, though we learn of numerous expeditions undertaken to this state by the later Kashmir kings. The ruling family belonged to the Khasha tribe.[4]

On the north-west, Rajauri was adjoined by the territory of Lohara, the chief valley of which is now known as Lohrin. Lohara became important for Kashmir from the end of the tenth century onwards when a branch of its ruling family obtained the Kashmir throne. Subsequently this branch succeeded to Lohara which was united with Kashmir under the same ruler. The chiefs of this family are mentioned to have belonged to the Khasha tribe. As the ancestral home of the rulers, Lohara obtained an important position during the rule of later kings of Kashmir. Lohara seems to have included the principality of Poonch, ancient Paranotsa, which in Heun Tsiang's time formed a part of the kingdom of Kashmir. Being on the direct route to the Western Punjab, Poonch is often mentioned in the Chronicles. It is possible that the hill state of Kalinjara, which is repeatedly mentioned by Kalhana, lay in this direction.

To the north-west of Poonch is the valley of the Vitasta. From ancient times it was held by the Kashmir kings as an outlying frontier district as far down as Bolyasaka, present Buliasa. Further down the valley up to Muzaffarabad the territory was held by fierce Khakha and Bomba tribes, who were subjugated by Gulab Singh only in the last century. This tract was known in ancient times as Dvarvati from which its modern designation of Dvarbidi has been derived.

Further to the west beyond Muzaffarabad lay the ancient kingdom of Urusa, now known as the district of Hazara. Its ruler figures as Arsakes in the accounts of Alexander's campaign. Heun Tsiang while coming to the Valley from the district found it a tributary of Kashmir. We find Urusa often mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*. The account of Samkaravarman's ill-fated expedition to Urusa furnishes us a clue as to the location of its capital then, which may have been near about the town of Abbotabad.[5]

The tract now known as Karnah in the Kishenganga valley bore the old name of Karnaha and was a small chiefship, tributary to Kashmir. Drava, the tract above the junction of the Kishenganga river with the

4. Ibid.
5. *Raj*, v-217.

Karnah stream, included the famous shrine of Sarada, so often mentioned in the Chronicles and was a feudal stronghold in the later history of this period. The upper Indus valley to which a route lay from Sarada seems to have been, however, outside the sphere of Kashmir political influence, hence we have no mention of any ancient name of the tract in the Chronicles.

Immediately above Sarada lies the territory known as Dardistan, or Dardadesa of the *Rajatarangini.* Its rulers who bore Hindu names more than once attempted invasions of the Valley. Daratpuri, the town of the Darads, may have occupied the position of modern Gurez. The Malechha chiefs who on two occasions figure as the Dard Rajas' allies in Kalhana's work, were perhaps rulers of other Dard tribes further towards the Indus who had earlier been converted to Islam.[6]

Crossing over from the headwaters of the Kishenganga river to those of the Dras river, we reach the Ladakh district, the land of the Bhauttas of the *Rajatarangini.* There are, however, very few references to these territories to enable us to form an idea of their political organisation and though the Valley suffered a lot from invasions from this side in the concluding years of the Hindu rule, even Jonaraja and Srivara, the later Chroniclers do not supply us with any information. Srivara, however, seems to have known the "little and the Great Bhautta-land", a reference to Baltistan and Ladakh.[7]

The eastern frontier of the Valley is formed by a mountain range which runs from the Zoji-la almost due south to Kishtwar. Along this range on the east lies a long narrow valley known in Kashmiri as MarivWadwan. Its high elevation and rigorous climate are responsible for its scanty population which is entirely Kashmiri. We have no mention of this tract in the *Rajatarangini* and it is doubtful if this belonged to the Kashmir kingdom under the Hindu rulers. Beyond it to the east stretches the belt of high mountains and glaciers, and to its south we reach once more the tract of Kishtwar.

Towns and Cities

As regards the internal condition of the Valley it was materially different from what it is today. Though the location of cities, towns and villages has changed but little, yet their importance as centres of trade or the seat of government varied from time to time. At present several

6. *Raj*; viii-2762.
7. Srivara, *Rajavalipataka*, II-96.

of thee oncė famous places are no more than insignificant villages.

According to Greek and Roman historians Kaspatyros was a city of Gandharians. Most probably it refers to the capital of Kashmir, which from ancient times had been known to foreigners by the same name as the kingdom. According to Kalhana, Asoka built the city of Srinagar which up to the sixth century AD was the capital of the Valley.[8] Pravarasena II built his city Pravarasenagar at the site occupied by the present Srinagar and moved the royal headquarters to it. Heun Tsiang definitely mentions it as the 'new city' in contradistinction to the 'old capital', Puranadhisthana, modern Pandrenthan.

The history of Srinagar is as interesting as that of the Valley. It was destroyed by fire several times and rebuilt. The houses were mainly constructed of timber then as now. Kalhana mentions in several places the splendour of its markets, gardens and lofty houses. There were no permanent bridges during the Hindu rule, but the river was spanned by a number of boat bridges. The *Rajdhani* or palāce of the Hindu rulers was most probably located just below the second bridge (Habba Kadal) on the left bank of the river. With its landmarks of the Hari Parbat and Sankaracharya hills, the city was dotted with richly endowed stone temples, traces of which can still be found in sculptured blocks, pillars and images in the walls and embankments.[9] Kalhana also mentions the *ghats* and the bathing houses of the city. Bilhana found the city equally charming and surpassing in beauty all other cities. "For its coolness in summer and for the beauty of its grooves", says he, "even those who have reached the garden of the celestials could not forget it."[10]

We have a mention of the foundation of three important cities by the Kusan rulers, Kaniska, Juska and Huviska. The memory of these cities still lives in their names. Kaniskapura, Huviskapura and Juskapura, are identified with the villages of Kanespura situated between the Vitasta and the Baramula-Srinagar highway; Uskur, 3.2 kilometres to the south-east of Srinagar.[11] Of these three cities Huviskapura has been often mentioned in the Chronicle and seems to have retained its importance for a long time as the headquarters of the Buddhist monks and also as the first town of note in the Valley on its entrance from the Jhelum valley route. Heun Tsiang stopped here after passing the ancient gate

8. *Raj*, i-104.
9. Stein, Trs, of *Rajatarangini*, Vol.I, pp. 100-102, footnotes.
10. *Vikram*, XVIII, 15, 16, 18.
11. *Raj*, i-168.

of Baramula. It is mentioned by Alberuni who gives its exact location.[12] Ruins of an ancient *vihara* and a *stupa* have been found near the village as also a large number of terracotta figures.

We have a mention of a town founded by Abhimanyu which is supposed to have been located at Bemyun near Srinagar. King Nara's town, Kimanarapura,[13] mentioned by Kalhana in connection with the legend of Susravas Naga, and situated near the modern town of Bijbihara, was supposed to have been a flourishing city with its markets full of fruits and vegetables and its *ghats* buzzing with loading and unloading operations of merchandise. It had lofty houses, parks and cool springs and 'surpassed even Kubera's town by the riches amassed there'. But the wicked deeds of its founder, King Nara, brought on it the wrath of the Nagas and it was destroyed by them by lightening and fire.

Near about Nara's city we have the town of Vijayeswara built round the famous shrine of Siva Vijayesa by King Vijaya.[14] The city figures prominently in the Chronicles as the refuge of King Ananta and also as the headquarters of the powerful Damaras of the southern district of the Valley. The temple which was surrounded by a high wall was set on fire by Ananta's son, Kalasa, and later by Bhiksacara. It was here that several decisive battles were fought during the civil war between the later Lohara kings and the several pretenders to the throne. About the middle of the seventh century AD, Pratapaditya II, founded the town called Pratapapura which has been identified with the present Tapar. Excavations conducted there recently have unearthed the foundations of an old stone temple, but no indication is found of the poetic assertion of Kalhana of its rivalling the city of Indra in splendour.

Lalitaditya's capital city of Parihaspura[15] which he took pains to build on a lavish scale, is now nothing but a desolate plain with the scattered ruins lying about in confusion. As already mentioned, the city was systematically destroyed by successive kings who robbed it of building materials and objects of art. Parihaspura lost its importance by these vandalistic acts and also as a result of the flood protection measures taken by Suyya, the engineer of Avantivarman, which changed the course of the Vitasta that had been flowing by it till then.

12. *India*, trans. Sachau. i, p. 207.
13. *Raj.*, i-274.
14. Ibid., ii-62.
15. For the position of the ruins and their identification with Lalitaditya's foundations, see *Raj.*, trans. by Stein, Vol.II, pp. 301-2.

Lalitaditya's grandson, Jayapida, built a city called Jayapura which has been identified with the present village of Andarkot. Situated on an island rising from the Sumbal lake, the fortified city was the scene of the drama which saw the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir in the 14th century. But except a few hamlets there is no trace to be found of this 'splendid town'.

The present town of Pampore (ancient Padmapura) famous for its saffron cultivation, was founded in the first quarter of the ninth century by Padma, the maternal uncle of Chippatajayapida. Due to its central position in the Valley, the town grew in importance and thus finds a frequent mention in the *Rajatarangini.*

The city of Avantivarman, marked by the modern town of Avantipura, stood on a high and dry spur of the Wastarwan hills, on the right bank of the Vitasta.[16] Owing to its central and strategic location in the Valley, the town has been of considerable importance since the date of its foundation, and hence is often mentioned in the *Samayamatrika* of Kshemendra and in the Chronicles of Kalhana, Jonaraja and Srivara. The large number of ruins extending up to the hills to the east of the present Avantipura town, show that in former times it used to cover a large area. Among the ruins can be recognised the remains of the two old temples of Siva Avantesvra and Visnu Avantisvamin.

The important town of Surapura, present Hurapur, the first stage from the Valley on the old Mughal Road over the Pir Panjal Pass, was founded by Sura, Avantivarman's able minister.[17] From Kalhana's mention of the transfer of the watch-station and fort on the Pass to the new town and from his other statements, it is evident that Surapura was a centre of trade in early days and commanded a strategic importance.

Another important town founded during Avantivarman's reign was that of Suyyapura by Suyya.[18] Identified with the present Sopore, the town situated on the Vitasta immediately where she leaves the Wular Lake, Suyyapura became a centre of trade in the north of the Valley.

Avantivarman's son, Samkaravarman, founded the city of Samkarapura, which is identified with Pattan, 28 kilometres below Srinagar on the Baramula road.[19] To build the city, Samkaravarman used the material of Parihaspura, Lalitaditya's capital. The temples of Samkaragaurisa

16. *Raj.*, v-44.
17. Ibid., v-39.
18. Ibid., v-118.
19. *Raj.*, v-156.

and Sugandesa built by the king can be identified by their ruins at Pattan. Samkarapura did not, however, rise to significance due to the unpopularity of its founder. But it remained for a long time the centre of woollen manufactures and trade in cattle.

Queen Didda founded two towns, Abhimanyapura and Kankanapura. The former is not traceable and the latter may perhaps be marked by the present village of Kangan, 28 kilometres from Srinagar on the road to Sonemarg.

Administrative Divisions

The Valley of Kashmir has from early times been divided into two great parts, known by the modern names of Kamraz and Maraz, *Sans.* Kramarajya and Madavarajya. We find a frequent reference to these in Kalhana's and later Chronicles. According to the prevailing notions Kamraz comprises the part of the Valley below Srinagar on both sides of the Vitasta and Maraz the rest of the Valley above Srinagar. That the boundary of these two divisions was already in old times indicated by a line drawn through the capital is proved by a close examination of the Chronicle[20]

These two divisions have from early times been further subdivided into a number of small districts known at present 'Parganas' but designated in old times as 'Visaya'. The number, names and limits of these sub-divisions have been subject to considerable variations during the Hindu period. The great majority of Parganas as detailed by Abul Fazal in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and known in the Valley even now, can be safely assumed to have already existed during Hindu rule. This is proved by the fact that the names of several Parganas are found in their ancient forms in the *Rajatarangini* and the later Chronicles. But since these texts do not furnish us with a complete list of the Visayas, it is difficult to draw an accurate map of the administrative subdivisions of the Valley in ancient times. Abul Fazal, however, furnishes us a list of 38 Parganas, and Bates who prepared the latestlist puts their number as 43 during the last century. This shows that though there have been some variations in the number and constitution of Paraganas from time to time, the main divisions and subdivisions of the Valley remained intact from early Hindu rule to the present day.

20. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol.II, p.560.

Population

There is unfortunately no record of the number of people inhabiting the Valley during any period of the Hindu rule. But the large number of administrative sub-divisions, which goes back to an early date, may be taken as an indication of the dense population of the Valley. There is every reason to believe that even at a later period it was fairly large. The existence of a large number of village sites in all parts of the Valley, remains of an extensive system of irrigation, the number of temple ruins and the uniform tradition of the people — all point to the same conclusion.

The fact of Kashmir having a far greater population in ancient times helps to explain the curious traditional verse which puts the number of villages in Kashmir at 66,063. The verse is found twice in *Lokaprakasha* and has been alluded to in Jonaraja's Chronicle. Though that figure must have at all time implied a considerable exaggeration, it is nevertheless characteristic of the popular notion on the subject. Even Sharif-ud-din whose information, collected about 1400 AD, is on the whole accurate, records: "It is popularly believed that in the whole of the province — plains and mountains together — are comprised 100,000 villages. The land is thickly populated."[21] It is curious that Mirza Haider, who had ruled Kashmir himself, copies this statement without modification or dissent.

Classes of Population

A close study of the *Rajatarangini* shows that the population of Kashmir in early times comprised several castes, among which Brahmins, Vaisyas, Sudras, Nisadas, Kiratas are frequently mentioned. The Rajputs or Rajaputras are associated with the fighting and the ruling caste. The Tantrins, Ekangas and Lavanyas seem to have been tribes of professional soldiers who in later times formed into formidable condottiere and became virtually king-makers. There is, however, no well-defined caste system mentioned either by Kshemendra or Kalhana. The reason is not far to seek. Buddhism which was introduced into Kashmir by Asoka and subsequently flourished under the Kusans, had been accepted by the masses and was for a number of centuries the dominant faith in the Valley. Caste system hence had lost all rigidity and except for the Brahmins who maintained their traditions

21. *Tarikhi-i-Rashidi*, p. 430.

tenaciously and who were responsible later in re-establishing the Hindu faith among the people of Kashmir, and low-caste tribes who followed the calling of scavengers, night-watchmen, and boatmen. Caste system, as prevalent in other parts of India, was absent. We even find men and women of the low-caste Dombas occupying positions of responsibility. Under Chakravarman the Dombas practically held all important posts in the court and two Domba women became the king's favourite queens.

Brahmins were, however, the privileged and honoured caste and devoted mainly to the study of the scriptures and to the calling of priests and teachers. We also find Brahmins occupying high positions in the government of the country. Thus Mitrasarman was the chief minister of Lalitaditya and Devasarman of his grandson, Jayapida. Queen Didda's chief minister for a long time was Bhatta Phalguna. We also find the Brahmins in the army. Bujanga, the son of a Brahmin Samanta was employed by Samgramaraja in a responsible post in his army. Kalhana's father, Champaka, held for a long time the post of the commander of forts under king Harsa.[22] Ajjaka, a Brahmin minister of Salhana, died in the battlefield while fighting against Sussala.[23] Lavaraja and Yasoraja, two Brahmins skilled in military exercises, were killed while fighting the assassins of Sussala.[24] Brahmins frequently took to arms during the unsettled times through which Kashmir passed often. A characteristic verse in the *Rajatarangini* mentions that in the peaceful times of Yasaskara, the Brahmin priests of temples sheathed their swords and again took to their peaceful avocations.

Besides the sacrificial fees, the main source of their income was the revenue from land-grants or *agraharas*, donated by kings, nobles and pious traders and landlords. It, therefore, follows that the Brahmins in Kashmir were mainly dependent on land and formed a class of small landlords. They also enjoyed the revenue of the villages endowed to temples. Sometimes they sold flowers, incense, and other requirements of worship to people visiting the temples or shrines.[25]

Politically the Brahmins were a power to reckon with. Through the Purohita corporations who resorted to hunger strikes *(prayopavasa)* whenever any action taken by the king or his ministers went against their own interest or against those of the country, the Brahmin class

22. *Raj.*, vii-1177.
23. Ibid., viii-472.
24. Ibid., viii-1345.
25. Ibid., v-168.

acted as an effective check on the power of the king. Often the Brahmin assemblies were called upon to choose a suitable person for the throne when there was an interregnum. It was such an assembly of Brahmins who selected Yasaskara as the king of Kashmir. During the reign of queen Didda we find the Brahmins holding a fast for removing Tunga from the office of chief ministership. Later in the reign of Didda's successor, Samgramaraja, they again resorted to a fast for the removal of Tunga from his high office. King Harsa had to exempt the Brahmins from forced labour as they undertook a fast. Sussala was once brought to his senses by a similar fast when, neglecting his kingly duties, the Damaras got an opportunity to oppress the people. Even as late as 1172 AD the Brahmins and other leading citizens chose a king when the throne fell vacant for want of a successor to king Vantideva.

Military Castes

The fighting castes of old Kashmir are represented by the Tantrins, Ekangas and Lavanyas. The Tantrins appear to have formed in Hindu times a military caste of strong organisation. They came into prominence during the early years of the tenth century AD when during the period of internal troubles between the succession of Partha and the defeat of Samkaravarman (906-36 AD) they organised themselves into a powerful condottiere and were at the height of their power. They acted as kingmakers. They raised different claimants to the throne of Kashmir one after the other, demanding larger and larger bribes from each puppet king and oppressed the land by their heavy exactions.

Subsequently they formed an important and often troublesome element in the army, in which they seem to have served as foot soldiers. They are in several references in the *Rajatarangini* clearly distinguished from the mounted forces and figure as royal guards.

The name Tantrin survives in the tribal name of Tantri which is borne by a considerable section of the Muhammadan agriculturist population of Kashmir. Families claiming the Tantri *Kram* or surname may be found in most of the towns and villages throughout the Valley.[26]

The exact meaning of the term Ekangas cannot be established with certainty. It is frequently used in Books Five to Seven of the *Rajatarangini* for the designation of an armed force. Troyer assumed them to have been royal bodyguards and various references in the

26. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol.I, p. 219.

Chronicle show that he is not wrong. They are mentioned along with Samantas (feudal lords), ministers, Tantrins and Kayasthas (officials) as influencing the affairs of the court and State.[27] They fought with the Tantrins, who supported another claimant to the crown,[28] and saved queen Didda from a rebel force, whose onslaught they opposed in orderly array at the palace gate.[29] They protected king Ananta with equal devotion against a pretender and were freed in return by the grateful prince from the harassing service at the *Aksapatala*.[30] It is in the vicinity of the *Aksapàtala* that Harsa endeavoured to collect a force of Ekangas for a final struggle.[31]

The latèr references show that Ekangas were a force organised in a military fashion but employed chiefly for police duties. Their modern counterpart would be customs and forest guards, and other revenue collecting agents. Till the beginning of the present century the 'Paltan Nizamat' was a regiment specially maintained in Kashmir for the support of the civil authorities in the collection of revenue, etc.

The Lavanyas who play a great part in the internal troubles which occurred in Kashmir during the closing years of the 11th and the beginning of 12th centuries, seems to have formed an important tribal section of the rural population who took to arms. Their name too survives in the modern *Kram* of Lon.[32] The numerous passages in which the Lavanyas as a body of individuals are referred to tell us nothing about their origin, but show that many of them must have held a position of influence as landowners or tribal headmen. Upto Jonaraja's time the Lavanyas seem to have retained a certain importance as their name is of frequent occurrence in his chronicle, but by Srivara, the later historian, they are mentioned only once.

Among the other castes, the Nisadas were perhaps the original inhabitants of the Valley and were relegated to menial work by the Aryan settlers. We find a mention of the Nisadas in the *Rajatarangini* where they are designated as boatmen.[33] Similarly the low-caste Kiratas are mentioned as huntsmen who lived in forests and destroyed

27. *Raj.*, v-342,446; vi-91, 132; vii-135.
28. Ibid., v-289.
29. Ibid., vi-244.
30. Ibid., vii-155-62.
31. Ibid., vii-1604.
32. The designation Lon as other *Krams* in Kashmir is nowadays a mere name, there being nothing to distinguish those who bear it from other agriculturists in regard to customs, occupation, etc.
33. *Raj.*, v-101.

wild animals by raising fires or by laying traps. During recent excavations at Burzahom, a settlement of pit-dwellers was unearthed along with hunting equipment like stone daggers, etc. These definitely belonged to a hunting class and Kiratas were perhaps their descendants. Though racially the Kiratas in the rest of India belonged to the Tibeto-Burman group, there is no such indication of their origin in Kashmir.

The Dombas have been frequently mentioned by Kalhana as a caste of menials. Sometimes they are associated with Chandalas.[34] Their exact occupation is not precisely indicated; they performed the duties. Dombas are mentioned as entertaining people with their music and dancing — they perhaps supplied the demand from common people for the much needed entertainment and relaxation.

The Chandalas seem to have been employed as night-watchmen and the king's bodyguard.[35] They were proficient in the use of the slings and were fierce and cruel fighters. We find Chandalas being several times employed by different groups to assassinate their rivals. They were also executioners and were no doubt universally hated.

The economic structure of ancient Kashmir as in the rest of India was mainly based on the conception of private property and ownership of wealth. This implied that apart from agriculture which was the main source of production, people took to trade, industry and other professions. Owing to the geographical insulation of the Valley, and its limited natural resources, trade and commerce occupied a secondary position to agriculture. During the rule of the Kusans and later of the Karkotas, Kashmir came into direct contact with the commercial centres in India and Central Asia, which must have naturally given rise to a boom in trade and commerce. And hence we find a rich class of traders growing up. The large hoards of Kashmir coins of the Karkotas found recently in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar indicate a flourishing trade between Kashmir and the rest of India.

The Damaras

After the decline of the Karkota empire, Kashmir reverted to its traditional insulation and with the growth of population there was a pressure on land which favoured the growth of powerful feudal landlords — the Damaras.

34. Ibid., vi-192.
35. Ibid., iv-516, vii-309.

The origin of the name Damara is shrouded in mystery. The important role that this landholder class played in the later history of the Hindu period, clearly indicates its power from large holdings of land. It is apparent from the mention of their seats in highly productive parts of the Valley and of their boorish manners which show them 'more like cultivators though they carry arms'.

Kalhana's first reference to the Damaras occurs in the Fourth Book of the *Rajatarangini* where among the maxims set forth by Lalitaditya is one directing the ruler to prevent hoarding of wealth by landlords as otherwise they would become powerful and rich Damaras and defy the orders of the king.[36] These maxims seem to have been put in the mouth of Lalitaditya by later historians, and indicate the rapid growth of the Damaras after his death. It was no doubt facilitated by the weak and instable reigns of later Karkota kings and the internecine warfare among the various pretenders. The rich landlords who employed a host of paid soldiers took the sides of these pretenders alternately and virtually became king-makers.

Though in the latter part of the Fifth Book the mention of the Damaras is comparatively less, we find that Didda and other rulers had to take recourse to strong measures to curb their power. After Didda's death, however, when again internecine conflicts took the Valley under their grip, the Damaras were virtually the rulers. In the struggles for the throne between Ananta and his son Kalasa, and between Utkarsa and Harsa, the Damaras took the side of one or the other and the final issue of the conflict depended mostly on their support. By the 12th century AD the Damaras had become very powerful. Sussala and Jayasimha spent the major part of their reigns in fighting them, but did not succeed in completely breaking their power. They had enormous wealth, a large army and strongholds in many important palaces in the Valley. Gargachandra, one of the Damaras, was so powerful that without his support no king could conveniently occupy the throne. 'The fortified residences of the Damaras frequently mentioned by the term *upavasa* were, like the castles of medieval feudal lords, centres of territorial divisions or Parganas (ancient Visayas) in which though they may have often comprised not more than a couple of villages, the king's authority could assert itself only by armed force at times of unrest. This condition of things continued for centuries after Kalhana's time, far into the Muhammadan period, and its recollection still lingers in the

36. *Raj*, iv-348.

tradition of the agricultural population of Kashmir.'

With the acquisition of wealth and power, the social status of the Damaras also rose and we find them entering into matrimonial relation with the traditional ruling class and even the royal families. In Kshemendra's *Samayamatrika*, a Damara named Samarasimha appears as a wealthy, respectable and cultured citizen.[37]

A Damara's estate ordinarily passed to his descendants on his death, but it was not by inheritance alone that a man could enter this privileged class. The *Rajatarangini* mentions the case of the merchant who amassed sufficient riches to purchase a vast estate and gradually raised himself to the position of a Damara. Similarly the income of a Damara did not depend entirely on the revenue of his agricultural estate. He could engage himself in trade and commerce as well.

This shows that the Damaras did not belong to any particular tribe or caste. Some have for instance been called Lavanya Damaras, or Damaras who originally belonged to the Lavanya tribe.

But though Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* supplies us with enough material to trace the rising power of the Damaras, it leaves us in the dark about the conditions under which their landed property, the basis of their power and influence, was acquired and held. "If we compare the conditions prevailing in other parts of India, where a similar class of landed aristocracy is still extant, the view suggests itself that a kind of servicetenure, the grant of land in return for military or other services, may have been the original foundation of the system. Yet even as regards this point the absence of an exact data prevents us from going beyond mere conjecture. Still less can we hope to ascertain the exact relations in which the Damaras may have stood towards their sovereign and towards the cultivators in matters of revenue, administration, etc. It is well known how multifarious and complicated the conditions regulating feudal tenure usually are even within a single Indian province or Native State."[38]

Religion

The earliest inhabitants of Kashmir had probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs, but so far no traces of their form of worship, etc, have been found. We have, however, in the *Nilamatpurana* and the Buddhist legends some indications of the cult of later settlements in the Valley.

37. *Samayamatrika*, II, 21 sqq.
38. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 307.

From these sources we find that before the Indo-Aryan immigration, the predominant cult was animism manifested by Naga or snake worship which has not ceased even till now and which manifests in the respect and sanctity that is attached to Nagas or springs in the Valley. Nagas or tutelary deities are supposed to reside in the springs and lakes and from early times considerable importance has been attached to their worship. The long account of Nagas given in the *Nilamatpurana*, the numerous temples built near the more famous springs, and the popularity and undoubtedly ancient origin of the pilgrimages directed to the latter, show the deep-seated belief in Naga worship among the people of the Valley.

Naga Worship

There are reasons to believe that in the fourth and third centuries BC Naga worship may have been the principal religion in Kashmir. The Buddhist text *Mahavamsa* mentions that when Asoka's adviser Moggaliputta Tissa sent his missionary Majjhantika to preach Buddhism in Kashmir and Gandhara, he found it under the rule of Naga king Aravala who could destroy the corn and other harvests by hailstorms. Majjhantika was met with hail and rain on his approach to Kashmir, but being unaffected by this, the Naga king realised his spiritual powers and together with his followers accepted Buddhism. A similar legend is related by Heun Tsiang. These are, however, the Buddhist versions of the *Nilamatpurana* legend already mentioned in an earlier chapter. They seem to corroborate the belief that the Naga or snake worship was the religion of the original inhabitants of the Valley.

Most of the rites prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana* are concerned with the nature of worship of popular deities. But there are some festivals which are particularly connected with the worship of Nagas. Thus Nila, the lord of the Nagas, was worshiped on the festival of the first fall of snow. He and other Nagas were also propitiated on *Amanjaripuja* which took place in the month of Chaitra (April). Another ceremony called Varunapanchami was held on the fifth day of Bhadra (July-August) and was connected with the worship of Nagas. The *Nilamatpurana* also records the names of the principal Nagas worshipped in Kashmir, the total number being 527.

That the Nagas were popular deities in Kashmir is testified to by Kalhana. According to him, Kashmir was a land protected by Nila, Sankha and Padma. When Buddhism was the predominant faith, one of

the early kings, Gonanda III, is said to have revived the ancient form of Naga worship as prescribed by *Nilamatpurana.* We have also the legend of Susravas Naga and the mention of Padma Naga the tutelary deity of the Wular lake. Kalhana mentions the annual festival of Taksaka Naga at the village of Zewan which was "frequented by dancers and strolling players and thronged by crowds of spectators." Kshemendra also refers to a Taksakayatra festival in *Samyamatrika* (11, 88). That Naga cult prevailed in the Valley long after the Hindu rule is testified to by Abul Fazal who says that there were 700 places of worship where there were carved images of snakes.

Buddhism

We have already traced the rise of Buddhism in Kashmir. Originally introduced by Asoka, it attained its zenith during the reign of Kaniska and other Kusan kings. It was the centre of Buddhist learning and several Buddhist scholars lived and studied here. Not only the Kusans but several local rulers of Kashmir patronised Buddhism. Meghavahana prohibited the slaughter of animals and his wife, Amritaprabha, erected a *vihara* for Buddhist pilgrims from foreign lands. During the reign of Pravarasena, his uncle Jayendra built the famous Jayendravihara and under Yudhisthira II, Pravarasena's son, several *viharas* and *chaityas* were erected by the king and his courtiers.

We have a fairly reliable account of the condition of Buddhism in Kashmir from the seventh century onwards. The Chinese travellers Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong, the Chronicle of Kalhana and the archaeological discoveries prove that Buddhism flourished under the Karkotas and their successors. Whereas Heun Tsiang mentions 100 monasteries in Kashmir in 631 AD, his countryman Ou-kong who came a century later found 300 monasteries, which clearly shows that Buddhism was still in ascendancy in the Valley.

Though Buddhism seems to have been overshadowed by the growing Saiva and Vaisnava faith which became predominant in the Valley after the end of Karkota rule, it still enjoyed partronage of the kings and nobility and seems to have been the faith of a large section of the people. Avantivarman and his successors, though followers of Saiva and Vaisnava faith, donated land to *viharas* and also built new ones. Harsa no doubt was responsible for the destruction of several Buddhist shrines, but he was no protector of Hindu temples too. He destroyed these as ruthlessly as the Buddhist *viharas.* We, however, find that even in the 12th century, Buddhism received patronage from

Jayasimha. He built many Buddhist viharas and repaired several. His queens and courtiers are also recorded to have built *viharas* and *chaityas*.

By the end of the 13th century, Buddhism disappeared from the Valley; some of the followers perhaps adopted Islam and the rest found a welcome home in Ladakh, where it is still the predominant faith.

Saivism

If the religious beliefs of the kings and royal families be regarded as a fair index of the popularity of a religious cult, Saivism must have been the predominant religion in Kashmir long before Buddhism was introduced there. Even during the period of Buddhist ascendancy Saivism received royal patronage. It was towards the beginning of the eighth century that Buddhism was overshadowed by Saivism not because of religious persecution, but because it had continued to remain the basic cult of the people all through the preceding centuries.

Kalhana mentions the existence of Siva shrines of Vijayesa and Bhutesa even in pre-Asokan days, and records the foundation of the temples of Siva Asokeswara by Asoka himself when he visited the Valley. He is said to have been a worshipper of Siva at the sacred shrine of Bhutesa. Asoka's son, Jalauka, was an ardent Saivist and made a vow that he would daily worship Siva at the two shrines of Vijayeswara and Jyestesa which are separated by a distance of 40 kilometres. For this purpose he had arranged a relay of horses every few kilometres and used to reach from one shrine to another in a few hours. He also erected a shrine of Siva Jyestarudra at Srinagar and built a stone temple at Nandiksetra for Siva Bhutesa.

Another king, Damodara II, is said to have been a devotee of Siva. The Hun ruler Miharakula who usurped the throne of Kashmir some time in the sixth century AD, was a patron of Brahmins and up-held Siva worship. Later king Gokarna and his son and successor, Narendraditya Khinkhila, also built Siva temples.

Belief in attaining spiritual merit by the consecration of a large number of Siva *lingas* seems to have been common during the early period of Kashmir history. Tunjina I and his ministers constructed several shrines dedicated to the worship of Siva and placed therein a number of Siva *lingas*. Similarly king Srestasena *alias* Pravarasena I constructed the first Pravareswara temple and Pravarasena II, who was an ardent worshipper of Siva consecrated the linga of Pravareswara.

Another king Ranaditya is said to have erected temples and shrines in honour of Siva.

During the time of the Karkota rule, several important and beautiful temples seem to have been built for Siva worship. Narendra Prabha, mother of Lalitaditya built a Siva shrine called Narendreswara. Lalitaditya himself is credited to have been an ardent believer in Saivism and erected the temple of Jyeṣtarudra, making a grant of the revenue of several villages for its maintenance. He also made a grant to the shrine of Siva Bhutesa. His minister, Mitrasarman, his guru, Acharya Bhappata, and a host of courtiers built shrines and temples dedicated to Siva. His grandson, Jayapida, is also believed to have been a Saivite. His chamberlain, Acha, built the shrine of Acheswara.

The kings of the Utpala dynasty were also patrons of Saivism. Avantivarman founded at Avantipura the temple of Avanteswara and fitted many pedestals with silver conduits at the Siva shrine of Tripureswara, Bhutesa and Vijayesa. He regularly went to worship at the shrines of Bhutesa and other places. His minister Sura built a temple of Siva and Parvati at the sacred site of Sureswariksetra and another at Bhutesa.

Avantivarman's son and successor, Samkaravarman, was also a devotee of Siva and built in his new city of Samkarapura, two temples dedicating them to the worship of Siva. Ruins of these temples are still found at Pattan, 27 kilometres below Srinagar on the Baramula road.

Several kings who followed the Utpala rulers, were ardent devotees of Siva. For instance, Parvagupta who was on the throne of Kashmir in about the middle of the tenth century founded a temple called Parvagupteswara and his successor Kshemagupta erected the temple of Kshemagupteswara in honour of Siva. Similarly several kings of the first Lohara dynasty were Siva worshippers. Samgramaraja is said to have obtained religious merit by restoring the famous shrine of Rameswara. Queen Suryamati founded the temple of Gaureswara and also consecrated another temple of Sadasiva near the palace. Her devotion to Siva is apparent by her consecration of *trisulas, Banalingas* and other sacred emblems. Her husband, king Ananta, is also recorded to have been a devotee of Siva. His son, king Kalasa, who also held the same belief restored the famous stone temple of Vijayeswara which had been damaged by fire. He also built the Siva temples of Tripureswara and Kaleswara, adorned with golden parasols, cup and other paraphernalia of worship.

Under the second Lohara dynasty, Saivism continued to flourish.

Jayasimha is said to have built new and restored several old temples and shrines dedicated to Siva. His minister Rilhana also built a Siva temple. Similarly his ministers, queens and other courtiers built shrines and temples in honour of Siva. The virtuous king Simhadeva "bowed to Samkara, the lord of Gauri, and caused Vijayeswara to be bathed in milk."

Several of the temples and shrines enumerated above have been identified with the large number of ruins dotting the Valley. The popularity of Saivism among the mass of common people during this period is shown by the images of Siva in different forms and the innumerable *lingas* found intact or scattered in pieces and fragments all over the Valley.

"The form of Saivism in Kashmir during the early period was of the Pasupata sect. According to a tradition recorded in the *Mahabharata*, the doctrine of Pasupata was first preached by Siva Srikantha. It is interesting to note that Siva Srikantha was also regarded in the Valley as the promulgator of Sivagama or Agamanta Saivism which included the system of Pasupata."[39] A number of *Tantras* on which the early Kashmir Saivism was based seem to have preached a dualistic doctrine. The *Advaita* Saivism founded and developed from the middle of the eighth century AD is perhaps the most solid contribution of Kashmir to Indian philosophy and culture and will be treated in detail in a later chapter.

Vaisnavism

Side by side with Buddhism and Saivism, the cult of Vaisnavism also flourished in Kashmir during the Hindu period. Pravarasena II, the founder the present Srinagar, is recorded to have consecrated the image of Visnu Jayaswamin. King Ranaditya is also said to have founded the shrine of Ranaswamin. Though perhaps a legendary figure, Ranaditya's temples seem to have been real foundations as we find a mention of Ranaswamin temple in Jayanta Bhatt's *Agamadambara* and also Kalhana's reference to it in the Fifth Book where he speaks of a visit paid to Ranaswamin by Chakravarman's queen. Similarly Mankha (12th century AD) in his *Srikanthacharita* refers to his father worshipping this shrine. Jonaraja also makes a reference to it in his commentary.

Under the rule of the Karkota dynasty, Vaisnavism not only

39. Sunil Chandra Roy; *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 152.

received royal patronage but seems to have been popular among the people. Durlabhavardhana and his minister built temples dedicated to Visnu. His grandson Chandrapida who lived in the eighth century AD consecrated the shrine of Visnu Tribhuvanaswamin. His preceptor who seems to have been a Vaisnava also built the temple of Gambiraswamin. Lalitaditya built several temples in honour of Visnu. Resolved upon the conquest of the world, he built a shrine of Kesva Visnu in the early part of his reign. He built Visnu temples at Huskapura and Lokapunya. In the former he installed a gold statue of Vishnu. In his new city of Parihaspura he built a splendid temple of Parihasakesva with a silver statue of Lord Visnu. Another splendid temple with the image of the boar incarnation of Visnu was erected in the same city. He also consecrated two images of Visnu, one under the title of Govardhanadhara and the other of Ramasvamin, the latter near the temple of Parihasakesva.

Lalitaditya's zeal for foundations of Visnu temples, shrines and statues, was perhaps responsible for similar pious works of his queen, ministers and courtiers. Some of the later Karkota kings also patronised Vaishnavism. Jayapida, for instance, built a few shrines in his city of Jayapura and his mother Amritaprabha built a temple Amritakesva in memory of her dead son. Many more Vaisnava foundations were made during the reign of Ajitapida. Under the Utpalas, Vaisnavism seems to have had its heyday. Avantivarman, who though professing Saivism in public, was at heart a Vaisnava, which fact he confessed at the time of his death. He built the shrine of Avantiswamin and his minister that of Suravarmanswamin. His engineer, the illustrious Suyya, also seems to have been an ardent Vaisnava. Not only did he build the temple of Hrisikesa Yogaswamin at the confluence of the Vitasta and Sindhu, but he also prohibited fishing and hunting in the Wular lake.

The popularity of Vaisnavism in the eighth century is further attested by the discovery of several images of Visnu in His different Avataras throughout the length and breadth of the Valley, particularly at Verinag, Martand, Avantipura, Baramula and Andarkot.

From the tenth century to the end of the Hindu rule in the 14th century AD, we find several kings and queens founding temples and shrines. Though the kingdom was reduced to its lowest depth of misery due to unstable rule and constant civil war, we still learn of the building of Vaisnava temples by queen Sugandha, king Partha, Yasaskar, Kshemagupta and queen Didda. The iconoclast Harsa destroyed a large number of temples of all sects and melted the copper, brass, silver and gold images therein to replenish his empty treasury, but

after his death we find that Uccala, his successor, made some amends by restoration of old and building of new Vaishnava temples. Even after his death Vaisnavism seems to have been popular as we learn of the building of Gokulas by Ratnavali the queen of Jayasimha and also by several of his courtiers.

"In the Vaishnavism of Kashmir, we find a synthesis of the different Vaishnava cults which were current in ancient India. In it seems to have mingled the faith of the Vedic Vishnu, the system of Pancharatra school the religion of the Satavata and the faith of the cowherd god Gopala Krishna. Rama was worshipped as an incarnation of Vishnu, but there is no definite evidence of Rama-cult in early Kashmir."[40]

Minor Gods and Goddesses

Besides Siva and Visnu, there seems to have been a universal faith in the usual Hindu gods particularly Ganesa, Skanda and Surya. According to Kalhana an image of Vinayaka Bhimaswamin existed in Kashmir as early as the days of Pravarasena II. The shrine has been identified with the temple of the *Svayambu* (self-made) image of Ganesa at the south-east spur of Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar. Stone images of Ganesa have been found in almost all the old temple ruins in the Valley. That Avantipura was centre of Ganesa worship is testified to by Kshemendra who says that bowls of sweets offered to Lord Ganesa were resold by the Brahmin priests in the town. According to *Nilamat purana*, the eighth of the dark fortnight of Asada (June) was dedicated to the worship of Ganesa and went by the name of Vinayaka-astami.

Skanda or Kumara worship in early Kashmir is borne out by the discovery of the stone images and sculptures in old temple ruins. The *Nilamatpurana* also refers to the worship of Kumara on the sixth of lunar Chaitra (March) every year to ensure the welfare of children. The worship of the Sun seems to have been brought into Kashmir by the Kusans, probably from Iran, as we have evidence of its early introduction from the *Rajatarangini* which mentions the building of a temple to the Sun-god by king Ranaditya. In the eighth century AD king Lalitaditya built his famous temple of Martand near the shrine and sacred spring of Bavan. Most Sun temples in India and the images of Surya go back to the period of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire (*circa* AD 800-1000), though only four of these temples have become

40. Sunil Chandra Roy. Ibid., p. 157.

famous as to continue as prominent centres of pilgrimeage — Multan, Modhera, Konark and Martand. Sun worship continued to be in vogue i n Kashmir long after Lalitaditya. We are told that king Survarman II (AD 939) paid homage to the temple of Sun-god Aditya swamin. The most celebrated shrine of Sun worship in the Valley in the 11th century AD was Tamraswamin, the image of which was melted by king Kalasa for coinage. His illness which followed was attributed to this sacrilegious deed and in order to atone for it he went to die at the feet of the image of Surya in the Martand temple. Kalasa's son, Harsa, who destroyed temples and divine images all over the Valley resisted from touching the image or temple of Martand, out of respect or probably out of fear of the Sun-god.

But the most popular and universally respected shrines were those of Goddess Durga in her various forms of Sharika, Raginia, Sarada, Jwala, Kali and Varahi. In the numerous springs, temples, hills and rocks, still respected and worshipped in the Valley, we find the memory of their popularity in ancient Kashmir. The *Rajatarangini* is full of references to 'Matricakras' or the mystic symbols of the various goddesses. Hundreds of images of Sakti in her various forms have been found in old temple ruins in the Valley We also find images of the goddess Lakshmi and of Saraswati and along with the worship of Visnu, these also found a prominent place among the goddesses worshipped by the people of ancient Kashmir.

Position of Women

A striking feature of the political history of Kashmir during the Hindu period is the important and sometimes decisive role played by women in the affairs of the State. Be it as queens or as ordinary inmates of the harem or as courtesans, women come frequently into the picture.

This position of importance implies that women of at least the upper classes received education of not only a general nature but in diplomacy and statecraft too. Bilhana, the poet laureate at the court of the Chalukya king Parmadi (11th century AD), says in the last canto of his "Life of Vikramankadeva", while describing his homeland, that the women of Kashmir spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit fluently.[41] There is, however, reason to believe that women of lower castes did not have this distinction and they had to be content with their vernacular speech.[42] A closer study of Damodargupta's *Kuttanimata*

41. *Vikramankadevacharita*, xviii-6.
42. *Raj.*, v-206.

Kavya shows that women of higher castes and affluent classes received education which included the sexual sciences of Vatsyayans, Dattaka, Vitaputra and Rajaputra; the art of dancing as propounded by Bharata; art as in the treatise of Visakhila; music as for instance in the works of Dantila. They had moreover to learn botany, painting, needlework, woodwork, claymodelling, cookery and receive practical training in instrumental music, singing and dancing.[43] No wonder we find the women of Kashmir as active as men in the discharge of public duties. There is no indication of women being in seclusion or relegated to the background. The use of the veil was non-existent. We find for instance women seated along with other officials and ministers in the court of Harsa.[44] We find them fighting alongside men on foot and on horseback. Vijayamalla while retreating after the unsuccessful coup against his brother, king Harsa, was ably assisted by his brave wife who clinging to him on his horse kept the pursuers at bay. Both of them and their horse swam across the flooded Vitasta near Shadipur, and thus escaped to the country of the Dards.[45] We have examples of heroism displayed by queen Didda and later by Kota Rani.

The women enjoyed equal rights with men is amply proved by the anointment of queens along with their husbands at the time of coronation. When, for instance, Harsa soon after his release from captivity was about to ascend the throne, "there came before him Sugala, hiding by boldness her great offence, to claim her position as the chief queen."[46] We find several queens making their husbands' rule a success by their wise handling of the administration and the royal treasury. A notable example is of queen Suryamati, wife of king Ananta who, finding the king weak and about to be deposed by the rebellious Damaras, stepped in upon the scene and by her wise and judicious selection of ministers and officials restored the confidence of the people in the king's administration. Later she even forced the king to abdicate in favour of his son Kalasa who, she hoped, would prove a more capable ruler.[47] Similarly queen Didda dominated her weak husband Kshemagupta and virtually ruled in his name. Later as regent and queen she controlled the destinies of the kingdom for half a century. That the queens of Kashmir were considered to be politically as important and powerful as the kings is illustrated by a passage in the *Rajatarangini* where a

43. *Kuttanimata Kavya*, 122, 123, 124.
44. *Raj.*, vii-945.
45. *Raj.*, vii-901-11.
46. *Raj.*, vii-830.
47. *Raj.*, vii-233.

forgotten Rai named Sarada, "an insignificant person who lived in Lohara", was made use of for the purpose of giving her sanction to legalise the rebel action of Lothana, a pretender to the throne of Jayasimaha. The rebels had "first conspired with the wife of the king-designate", which also shows the active participation of the ladies of the ruling class in political work.[48]

That women owned private property is illustrated by another illuminating reference by Kalhana. While enumerating the chief Damara lords who remained neutral in the rebellion raised by Bhoja, another pretender to Jayasimaha's throne, he mentions a Damara lady also who held the fief in her own right.[49]

Women had thus "emerged from the domestic into the political stage, were free, owned immovable property, managed their own estates and even fought at the head of their troops."

Regarding the proper age of marriage there is no evidence forthcoming from the *Rajatarangini*. But it seems that pre-puberty marriages were not in vogue.[50] We learn, for instance, from a passage describing Sussala's fight for the throne that the wife of his ally the powerful Damara lord, Garagachandra, brought her two youthful daughters one of whom was married to Sussala and another to his son Jayasimha.[51] It brings another significant practice into view that of inter-caste marriages. Damara Kosthaka was married to a Rajput lady. We have the example of Chakravarman marrying *Domba* girls and elevating them to the position of chief queens.

The family life of the king and the nobility was polygamous. The seraglios of the kings were full of queens, concubines from all castes and their example was followed by the courtiers and aristocrats. Polyandry does not, however, seem to have been in vogue, though in certain hill states bordering on Kashmir and among some aboriginal tribes it might have been practised. Since the Hindu system of joint-family was universal, we find the daughter-in-law under the constant supervision and control of her mother-in-law. Queen Suryamati, for example, treated the wives of her son, Kalasa, harshly and required them to clean the palace with their own hands.[52] Widows were expected to live a pure life, devoid of all luxury. The ornaments or gorgeous

48. *Raj.*, viii-1823. See also vii-535, viii-1968, 3070-73 3096-3109.
49. *Raj.*, viii-3115.
50. *Desopadesa*, vii.
51. *Raj.*, viii-459-60.
52. Ibid., vii-250.

dress were forbidden to them.[53] But the remarriage of widows and of other women does not seem to have been absolutely forbidden. We have the example of king Pratapaditya II marrying the wife of a rich merchant Nona. Kota Rani's remarriage with Udyanadeva after the death of her husband Rinchin, shows that widow marriage was permitted.

This brings us to the custom of sati, the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband. The custom seems to have been widespread among at least the ruling classes. The Damara widows, for instance, did not follow their husbands to the pyre. In a passage where he praises the wife of the Damara Kosthaka who became a sati when her husband was mortally wounded, Kalhana does not omit to contrast this conduct with that of the ordinary Damara women who did not show much regard for their character as widows. Kalhana plainly attributes the exceptional conduct of Kosthaka's wife to her noble descent from a family of Rajputs.[54] In Somadeva's stories of *Kathasaritasagara* we find several instances of this custom. The *Rajatarangini* gives a number of historical cases of widows burning themselves at the death of their husbands. Surendravati and two other queens of Samkaravarman were cremated with his body.[55] At the death of Yasaskara, his wife Trailokyadevi followed him on to the funeral pyre.[56] Queen Suryamati burned herself along with the dead body of her husband, king Ananta. Mammanika and six other queens accompanied king Kalasa to death, and so did Kumudalekha to her husband, Malla.

Noı only was the widow expected to become sati along with the dead body of her husband, she burned herself even separately after some days of his death as did, for instance, Jayamati, the queen of Uccala. Nor was the custom of sati confined to the royal family alone. Malla, the wife of Bhogasena, the chief justice of Uccala, followed her husband to death. Sometimes courtesans accompanied their masters into fire. Jayamati a harlot of king Kalasa and Sahaja a concubine of king Utkarsa, entered the pyre of their dead masters. The custom of sati was so deep-rooted that even mothers, sisters and other relatives burned themselves at the death of their beloved deceased. Gajja cremated herself with her son Ananda, Vallabha with her brother-in-law Malla and the sister of Dilhabhattaraka with her brother. The

53. Ibid., viii-1969.
54. *Raj.*, viii-2337.
55. *Raj.*, v-226.
56. Ibid., vi-107.

custom seems to have been in general vogue long after the end of Hindu rule, when Sultan Sikandar considering it contrary to the law of Islam, stopped it forthwith.[57]

From a perusal of Kshemendra's and Damodargupta's works, it appears that prostituation was popular in society during the Hindu period. Because of their graces of form and manners and accomplishments, the courtesans enjoyed high social esteem. We learn also from contemporary literature that they were renowned for their beauty, wit and other accomplishments as well as their wealth and luxury.[58] They often adorned the king's inner apartments and were usually the power behind the throne. But the immoral atmosphere among certain classes gave rise to, and fostered the growth of, certain evil practices in the society, one of which was the institution of *devadasi* or dedication of girls to the temple deities.

The custom seems to have been in practice all over India from early times. Kalhana mentions that king Jalauka[59] gave hundred ladies of his seraglio who were well versed in dancing and singing to serve in the temple of Jyestarudra. It seems that the custom continued during the Karkota rule as well. Lalitaditya, in the course of a hunting expedition, came across two dancing girls dedicated to a temple. Kalasa married a dancing girl, Kayya, who was dedicated to a temple. Utkarsa, his son, "had seen Sahaja, who had been a dancing girl attached to a temple, on the dancing-stage, and had taken her as a concubine into the royal seraglio."[60] When she had been a courtesan, she had been favoured also by Harsa, who implored her not to become a sati after Utkarsa's suicide. Kalhana himself was an eyewitness of superannuated dancing women in the temples of the Valley.[61]

The practice of *devadasi* seems to have received opposition from the honest and pure-minded section of the people. Alberuni refers to such opposition in the north-west India of his time, but laments that this opposition was of no avail since the kings and nobles supported the custom.

Administration

According to Kalhana the sovereignty of the State lies in the king,

57. Sufi, *Kashir,* Vol. I, p. 146.
58. *The Classical Age*, p. 568.
59. *Raj.*, i-151.
60. *Raj.*, vii-858.
61. Ibid., viii-707.

who is of divine origin and has absolute power. In the opening chapter of his work we find an allusion to the divine origin of the king when on Lord Krishan's advice queen Yasovati was made the regent of her infant son on the death of king Damodara. The nobles and ministers grumbled at a woman being crowned queen, but Lord Krishna appeased them by reciting the following verse as quoted in the *Nilamatpurana:*

> "Kashmir is Parvati; know that its king is a portion of Siva. Though he be wicked, a wise man who desires his own prosperity will not despise him."[62]

The Buddhist conception of Monarchy also conformed to this theory, though in a different way. The king is called Sarva Mahasakya and we find an echo of it in the *Rajatarangini* in connection with the story of an attempted assassination of king Jaluka, Asoka's son, by a witch. Having failed to achieve her black objective, the witch addresses the king in the following words:

> "The excited Buddhas sent me forth to kill you. But then the Bodhisatvas called me and gave me the following directions: 'That king is a great *Sakya* (Mahasakya). You cannot hurt him; but in his presence, O good one, you will obtain liberation from darkness (sin)'."[63]

The king on his part had to be humble and modest, versed in sacred and secular lore. He received his training for the high office from his childhood and particularly when he occupied the position of Yuvaraj. We have an idea of the strenuous training that a Yuvaraj received from an autobiographical recollection of Samkaravarman. In reply to his son's remonstrances not to burden the poor subjects with heavy exactions, Samkaravarman disdainfully says:

> "When I was a boy I also had, like you, great affection for the people. My father (Avantivarman) was making me run along his horses barefooted and with heavy armour when hot, and in thin clothing when cold, to make me feel the hardships the common people endure, so that when I ascended the throne, I would not be too hard upon my subjects. But in spite of these practical lessons, I have become hard-hearted — the concomitance of authority and despotism — and I would entreat you not to behave in a harder manner than myself when you attain royal dignity."[64]

62. Ibid., i-72.
63. *Raj.*, i-140-44.
64. *Raj.*, v-195-203.

Though the office of kingship was hereditary, we have several instances of kings being placed on the throne of Kashmir either by the council of ministers or by a committee of nobles and Brahmins. Meghavahana and Matrigupta were chosen by the ministers[65] and when queen Sugandha (904-6 AD) wanted to nominate a fit successor to the throne she had to seek the advice and permission of the ministers.[66] Similarly king Yasaskara (939-48 AD) had also to secure the approval of the ministers to the consecration, before his death, of Varnata as king.

Council of Ministers

In order to carry on successfully the heavy work of administration, the king depended on the assistance of his ministers. In the pre-Asokan period, the government of Kashmir was of the same pattern as in other States of India, with seven officials or ministers — the Judge, the Revenue Superintendent, the Treasurer, the Commander of the Army, the Envoy, the Purohita and the Astrologer. With the extension of Asoka's empire to Kashmir, it seems the system of Mauryan administration was introduced. Jaluka increased the number of offices to and by this act, according to Kalhana, inaugurated the constitutional system of Yudhisthira,[67] meaning thereby the 18 Departments of State mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (II 5-38) and *Ramayana* (II 100-36). These were the Councillor, the Purohita, Heir Apparent, Generalissimo, Chamberlain, Steward of the Royal Household, Superintendent of Prisons, Treasurer, Auditor of the Treasury, Officer with Judicial Functions, Prefect of the City. Engineer of Works, Lord Chief Justice, President of the Assembly, Warden of Criminal Jurisdiction, Warden of Fortifications, Warden of Marches, and Conservator of Forests.

The system continued till the time of Lalitaditya who created five new functionaries of high status *(Panchamahasabada)* which were scarcely more than mere court titles.[68] We find the title of *Panchamahasabada* bestowed upon his chief minister, Mitrasarman. Another minister to have borne it was Jayadatta in Jayapida's reign. Utpala, the maternal uncle of Chippatajayapida, who usurped all royal power also held this title.

Of all the ministers the *Sarvadhikara* or chief minister was the

65. Ibid., iii-2, 233-40.
66. Ibid., v-250.
67. *Raj.*, i-118-20.
68. Ibid., iv-141.

most important and powerful. His position was 'above anybody' and he was directly chosen by the ruler. Judging from the comparatively rare mention of the post in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, it may be concluded that it did not figure regularly as the highest step in the official hierarchy, but was bestowed only on dignitories of exceptional influence and power.[69] This is indicated by the fact that Tunga,[70] queen Didda's all-powerful minister bore this title and also by the administrative measures recorded of *Sarvadhikarin* Gauraka.[71] It seems that generally the powers attached to this post were divided among several ministers.[72]

From Kalhana's account it appears that the prime minister dictated the policy of the State and if the king was weak or ineffective, it was he who exercised the supreme power of the Government.

The next in rank and importance was the minister in charge of revenue administration, known as *Grahakrityadhikarin*. He also received his appointment direct from the king. It appears from Kshemendra that this post, which was originally created by Samkaravarman, was one of the most important offices and it was the highest ambition of every revenue officer to occupy this position.[73] He had under him the official treasurer *(ganjavara)* and five secretaries *(divira)*. All domestic expenses, such as grants to temples, Brahmins, the poor and the strangers, grants for the fodder of domestic animals and salaries of royal servants could be incurred only with his consent. Seven officers whom he could appoint worked under him.

Another important minister was the one in charge of foreign affairs *(Samdhivigrahika)* and of peace and war, and relations with other kingdoms. He drafted and signed treaties on behalf of the king. We have an important reference to his powers in a verse in the *Rajatarangini* where Lalitaditya's minister of foreign affairs, Mitrasarman, objects to the draft of the treaty with Yasovarman of Kanauj, on the point of a diplomatic usage.[74]

The office of the minister-in-waiting *(Padagra)* combined the duties of revenue collection and finance administration. It is probable that the superintendent of *Aksapatala* or the department of accountant-

69. *Raj.*, vii-364, 568; viii-862, 1850.
70. *Raj.*, vi-333.
71. Ibid., viii-560.
72. Ibid., viii-2471.
73. *Narmamala.*, I-32, 50.
74. *Raj.*, iv-137-38.

general and the *Pattapadhyaya*, the recorder of official documents, functioned under him.[75] It is evident from several passages in the Chronicle that the superintendent of the *Aksapatala* held an important post having under his command a contingent of Ekangas or military police. "It is curious to note", says Stein, "that the modern *Daftar-i-Nizamat* which until the recent administrative changes represented in Kashmir the Accountant-general's office, had actually under its control the force called 'Paltan Nizamat' to which that of Ekangas closely corresponds.[76]

Judicial Administration

All Hindu theories lay the greatest stress on the administration of justice as an essential part of the protection to which the people are entitled from the government.[77] According to Manu, the king should normally preside over the law-courts and be assisted by Brahmins and experienced councillors. The king is to hold court in a separate building in his own palace. The delegation of this regal duty to a chief justice is equally well known to Indian tradition. This delegate, who in the Dharma texts figures under many different names may well have taken his title of *Rajasthanadhikara* or simply *Rajasthana* from the royal palace in which his court was held.[78]

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* we find that the functions of *Rajasthanadhikara* were connected with the administration of justice. It was evidently a high post, judging from its mention along with the commander-in-chief and the Lord of Marches. The list of great officers given at the commencement of the Fourth Book of *Lokaprakasa* describes him as looking after the protection of the subjects.

Below the chief-justice there were other subordinate judges who were designated as *tantrapati* and *Rajasthanamantrinah*. Judicial powers seem to have been exercised by other civil officers too, for instance, the accounts-office called Seda is described as a Rajasthana in one of the passages of the Chronicle.[79]

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75. *Raj.*, v-398.
76. Trans. of *Rajatarangini*, vol. I, p. 224.
77. We have a typical instance of king Harsa in the beginning of his reign installing four bells at the palace gate "to inform him by their sound of those who came to make representation" —*Raj.*, vii-879.
78. *Raj.*, vii-601 viii-181, 1046, 1982, 2618.
79. *Raj.*, vii-576.

The chief of the police department was called *Dandanayaka* or *Dandadhikarin.*[80] He presided over an elaborate police force spread all over the kingdom. There was a regular system of espionage, the spies being known as *chakrika, pisuna* and *pumschalaka.*[81]

District and Village Administration

Below the Council of Ministers the most important office in the governmental machinery was that of the *Mandalesa* or governor. As already mentioned, the Valley was divided into two administrative divisions — Kamraz *(Kramarajya)* and Maraz *(Madavarajya)* — which were put under the charge of a *Mandalesa.*[82] A third division, that of Lohara, was added during the rule of the Lohara dynasty. The *Mandalesa* was the head of administration of the division. Both the divisions of Kamraz and Maraz were sub-divided into a number of *visayas*, corresponding to the modern Paraganas. Each *visaya*, according to Kshemendra, was under an officer known as *Margapati.*[83] He supervised the collection of taxes, administration of justice and maintenance of law and order. He inspected roads and bridges and checked the accounts of village officials.

The administration had the village as the unit and the institution of village officials existed from ancient times.[84] The two important officials of village administration were the headman *(Skandaka)*, the modern Muqadam or Lambardar, whose function, besides collecting the land revenue and other cesses, was to look after the welfare of the village and ensure a liaison between the villagers and the government. He has since ancient days been an important factor in rural administration. His office was generally hereditary, but subject to change by the *Margapati.* A specified percentage of revenues collected by the *Skandaka* was retained by him as his emolument.

The other important village official was the village accountant *(Gramakayastha)* who kept the papers showing the area of the holdings of the villagers, with their revenue assessment etc. He held his office at the will of the *Margapati* and as we learn from the *Rajatarangini* paid bribes to him for retention of his post.[85] Several

80. *Raj.*, vii-591, vii-640.
81. *Narmamala*, p.6.
82. *Raj.*, vii-1304.
83. *Narmamala*, I, 97, 127.
84. *Raj.*, v-175.
85. *Raj.*, v-265.

kings (for example, Samkaravarman) levied on the villages, in addition to regular assessment, contributions for the monthly pay of the *Skandaka* and *Gramakayastha*.

The major towns and cities were under the administrative charge of the *Nagaradhikrta*, also called *Nagaradhipa* (the City-Prefect). He was in charge of collecting house and scavenging tax, and other cesses. He inspected weights and measures of traders and checked abuses which caused disorder in commercial transactions. He levied fines on house-holders guilty of the immoral conduct of their womenfolk and punished those who had carnal intercourse with dancing girls received in households as wedded wives. He was evidently an inspector of morals.[86] The maintenance of law and order of the city was one of his duties and we find one of these officials, Vijayasimha, distinguishing himself by the suppression of all thieves.[87] The *Nagaradhipa* was also expected to organise the defence of the city in times of emergency. The city-prefect, Naga, was in charge of a large force and was entrusted with the defence of the city when Sussala and Uccala attacked king Harsa.[88] Another city-prefect, Janaka, was called by Sussala to suppress a revolt of his troops which broke out in the city.[89]

Yasaskara appointed four prefects in order to increase his revenue by the contributions they had to offer in competition. The officials had of course to recoup themselves by increased taxation from the citizens.[90] Bhuyya, a contemporary city-prefect of queen Didda, is said to have encouraged her in her religious edification.[91]

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini*, it appears that Kashmir had developed a well-organised and efficient system of executive, revenue and judicial administration, which explains the continuity and maintenance of a smooth government even in times when there was a rapid change of rulers. With slight modifications effected now and then to suit the fiscal policy of various kings, the administrative machinery mainly followed a uniform pattern throughout the Hindu period.

Kayasthas — The Civil Servants

To man this efficient but complicated machinery, there was

86. *Raj.*, viii-3336-38.
87. Ibid., vii-580.
88. Ibid., vii-1542.
89. *Raj.*, viii-814.
90. *Raj.*, vi-70.
91. Ibid., vii-296.

evolved a highly trained class of civil servants known as *Kayasthas*. The term Kayastha did not denote any particular caste, but applied to all the members of bureaucracy — from the lowest clerk to the highest official. The career of a Kayastha was open to all castes and classes of population. Kalhana specifically mentions one instance of a low class *aramika* (vegetable gardener) entering into the ranks of bureaucracy as a Kayastha. A Kayastha drew his salary from the royal treasury probably on the monthly basis, but besides this he often usurped part of the taxes he collected, and also realised unjust and often vexatious bribes and other perquisites from the people who came under his charge. While describing the conditions of the Valley under Jayapida's reign, Kalhana says that Kayasthas carried off most of the taxes realised from the people, depositing only a small fraction in the king's treasury. Both Kshemendra and Kalhana make many a hard hit at the vices of the Kayasthas — their greed for money, dihonest dealings, low moral character and pride.

But due to their efficiency in conducting the day-to-day administration, the Kayasthas, particularly during the later centuries of Hindu rule, acquired enormous power. It was for their capacity to raise new taxes that "the kings of Kashmir became habituated to looking at the faces of the Kayasthas for guidance, and to following the direction of their servants."[92]

The *Narmamala* of Kshemendra written during the reign of king Ananta, contains a detailed account of the Kayasthas and mentions a large number of posts held by them. The increase in the number of official posts denotes a greater interference with the private life of individuals and the close inspection of their doings. Particular attention was paid to the realisation of revenue from landholdings. This naturally made the Kayasthas unpopular with the masses, and to win the support of the latter, some of the kings like Uccala, adopted severe measures to curb the power of the Kayasthas.[93] But they were so entrenched that when a century later king Jagadeva tried to imitate Uccala in his policy towards the Kayasthas, he had to suffer defeat at their hands and was forced to abdicate and leave the Valley.[94] But the Kayasthas too had to leave the Valley as a result of wide spread hatred of them by the masses. The later Hindu and the first Muslim rulers had to fill up their vacancies by the Kashmiri Pandits who were well-read.

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92. *Raj.*, vi-623.
93. *Raj.*, viii-85-114.
94. Dutt, *Kings of Kashmir*, p.8.

Military Organisation

The king's armed forces were under the charge of the *Kampanesa*, also called *Kampanadhipati, Kampanapati,* etc, the Commander-in-Chief.[95] He was one of the highest functionaries of the State, next only to the Yuvaraj or heir-apparent, and the prime minister. He organised the foreign expeditions and was the leader of the royal troops in fights, sieges, etc. Under him there were other army officers some of whom were designated as *Kampanodgrahaka*.

But the most important post in the military organisation of Kashmir was that of *Dvarapati*, also called *Dvaradhipa*, the commander of frontier passes. The kings of Kashmir from ancient times paid special attention to the defence of the passes leading into the Valley and established watch-stations and forts (*dranga*) by which a careful guard was kept over the passes. Numerous passages in the Chronicles show that they served at the same time the purposes of defence, customs and police administration. They were garrisoned by troops under special comman-ders designated as *Drangesa* or *Drangadhipa*. The control over all these frontier stations and the command of the 'Marches' was vested in one high State officer, known by the title of *Dvarapati*.

The history of Kashmir shows that it was on the defence of these frontier passes that the safety of the Valley depended and hence it is understandable why the post of the *Dvaradhipa* wielded so much influence and power. We are told that the post required soldierly qualities and implied rough duties.[96] We generally find him engaged in fighting the troublesome tribes on the frontiers of the Valley and warding off the inroads of numerous pretenders to the throne of Kashmir, or preventing their escape by closing the routes leading out.[97] The *Dvaradhipa* also exercised judicial power over the commandants of the forts.[98] It is clear from Kalhana's expressions recording the frequent transfer of the *Dvar* office in the troubled times of the beginning of the 12th century that the charge of the 'Gate' was never held by more than one person. It signifies a unity of command over all the passes.

Ancient Kashmir had long and brilliant military traditions. Being

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95. *Raj.*, vii-154, 267, 923, 1319, viii-177, 180, 860, 960, 1046, 1959, 2205, 3322.
96. *Raj.*, viii-422.
97. *Raj.*, vii-966, vii-912, 584.
98. Ibid., vii-1172.

a small Valley, favoured by nature with a beautiful landscape and rich and fertile soil, it was coveted by people from the inhospitable regions of Central Asia and Tibet. Naturally, Kashmir had to perfect its military organisation for self-defence. During the time of the Indo-Greek occupation as also when it was a part of the Kusan empire, Kashmiris received a thorough schooling in new methods of warfare. But basically these conformed to the traditional military organisation as prevalent in the rest of India. We thus learn of the preparations made by Embisaros (Abhisares), the astute king of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera) to oppose, in alliance with Poros, the army of Alexander.[99]

With the extension of the Mauryan empire to Kashmir under Asoka it was but natural that the military organisation as perfected by them should have been introduced there. Kalhana informs us that the army of Kashmir comprised the traditional four arms — the elephants, cavalry, infantry and litters (in place of the chariots in the plains), with their eighteenfold divisions.[100] Each of these arms would naturally fall under the control of a distinct authority. There was, besides, the well-organised department of supplies and transport. Kashmir being an alpine state with difficult mountain paths, the use of wheeled carriages was not practicable. In their place there developed a system of *corvee* in the Valley. All able bodied youth who did not otherwise join any combatant wing of the army, were liable to be called upon to carry rations, fodder for horses and elephants and other war supplies for the army on the march.[101] It seems that during the time of the Imperial Karkotas, services of these load carriers were paid for, as huge amounts of money collected during foreign campaigns in loot and tribute were available for this.[102] Samkaravarman, and later kings, whose expeditions did not meet with much success, had to take recourse to *begar* or forced labour.

War Elephants

The elephant was used both for carriage, attack and defence.[103]

99. M'Crindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 274.
100. *Raj.*, vii-1371; viii-1513. This refers to the conventional division of the army as indicated, *e.g.* in *Amarkosa*, ii-8, 79, 81.
101. Samkaravarman was certainly not the first to levy *begar* for transport purposes, but he seems to have given to this *corvee* a systematic organisation and to have used it also for fiscal extortion, *See* Stein trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, p. 209.
102. *Raj.*, iv-176.
103. *Raj.*, iv-147; v-143-44; vii-1553-56; viii-9.

Although not of much use in the hills, the elephant was a tower of strength in battles fought on the plains of India. Elephants seem to have been procured from the forests of Vindhyas, Assam and Kalinga.[104] They were protected with armour on the head, joints and other parts of their huge body. But often they were more a liability than an asset in a battle. King Harsa, for instance, who came out in person to fight the rebels in Srinagar had to suffer a terrible defeat when his fighting elephant, hit in joints by arrows from the rebel forces, "raised a trumpeting roar and turning back trampled down with his feet his own force. Attacked by the elephant which had turned hostile the foot and horse of the army were routed."[105]

The Cavalry

The main strength of the army, however, lay in its cavalry. Kashmir is fortunate in having a rich pasture land and mountain meadows which are admirably suited for horse-breeding.[106] Kalhana's references to swift and well-bred horses of kings and their armies, show the import into the Valley of the famous thoroughbreds of Central Asia and Afghanistan.[107] Horse was naturally the aeroplane of ancient warfare; on its speed and mobility depended the fate of a battle. Both the rider and the mount were protected by armour. Judging from his numerous references to the horse, Kalhana, it seems must himself have been a horseman. He tells us that his father Champaka had a dispute over a mare with the crown prince Bhoja.[108] His account shows that the stability of the ruler of Kashmir depended upon the superiority of his cavalry and large treasures were expended in the purchase of thoroughbreds.[109]

The horseman carried two javelins and a buckler, a short sword, and wore chain-armour and helmet. It is interesting to find a reference in Kalhana to the leather cuirass[110] so popular with the golden Horde of Genghis Khan which centuries later we find in the equipment of the officers of the famous Maratha cavalry. We have perhaps the best pen-picture of the arms and costume of a warrior of ancient Kashmir in

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104. *Raj.*, iv-147.
105. *Raj.*, vii-1552-56.
106. *Raj.*, viii-1577-78.
107. The horses of the Kambojas (Afghanistan) are referred to in Raj., iv-165.
108. *Raj.*, vii-1592.
109. *Raj.*, iv-265, 415; v-143-44; vii-394, 403, 910, 1512-14; viii-9, 73, 199, 941.
110. *Raj.*, vi-248-49.

the following description of Chakravarman's triumphant entry into Srinagar at the time of his restoration to the throne of Kashmir:

> "With his noble charger proudly curvetting in the centre of the horse-guards; raising the helmet when it slipped with the left hand which held the bridle, the ear-rings lit up by the glinting hilt which was held in the other hand moist with perspiration: his face terrifying with the knitting of the eye-brows, being irritated by the pressure on the neck of his high and stiff armour; threatening in bursts of anger the plunderers who had looted the shops and reassuring the affrighted citizens with signs of the head and the eye while the rattle of his kettle-drums, hindering the benedictory pronouncements of the citizens, rent the hearing — Chakravarman, resplendent in military triumph, made his entry into the city."[111]

The Infantry

The infantry were all armed with a broad and heavy double-edged sword, suspended from the left shoulder and a long buckler of undressed ox-hide. In addition to these arms, each man carried either a javelin or a bow or a mace. Besides, he had a double-edged long knife,[112] carried in a belt.

Kalhana gives at several places in his history description of chase, tourneys, duels and battles.[113] It appears that the infantry were highly trained in the art of shooting arrows and unerring darts.[114] He often refers to the "shower of arrows,"[115] which were at times treated with poison. While describing the heroic exploits of Kandarpa, the commander-in-chief of king Harsa, Kalhana records that he used burning arrows smeared over with vegetable oil, in the battle of Rajauri. Struck by these the enemy caught fire and fled in bewilderment, believing that he knew the use of the fire-weapon *(agnya-astra)*.[116]

Another weapon in which Kashmiri soldiers specialised was the sling. With a round but sharp stone tied to its end, they flung the stone with unerring accuracy at the target. Kalhana mentions the use of the sling as early as the time of Jayapida. On his return from a conquering

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111. *Raj.*, v-341-47.
112. *Raj.*, viii-29.
113. *Raj.*, viii-24,28.
114. Ibid., vii-156.
115. Ibid., viii-25.
116. Ibid., 984.

expedition in the south, he found the usurper Jajja on the throne of Kashmir. In the thick of the battle fought between the forces of Jayapida and Jajja, a Chandala youth flung a stone with his sling at Jajja's face which killed him outright.[117] The sling was the favourite weapon of Kashmiris till as late as the time of Gulab Singh who put a stop to the frequent mimic battles between youth of different wards of Srinagar who used to turn out with slings and stones and played a very serious and earnest game.[118]

Strength and Composition of the Army

We have no reliable record of the strength of Kashmir army. It must have naturally varied from time to time. Kalhana, however, records that Jayapida's army including that of his feudatories comprised 80,000 litters *(Kaniratha)*, whereas that of Lalitaditya had over a lakh.[119] Samkaravarman's army, he says, consisted of 900,000 of footsoldiers, 300 elephants and 100,000 of horsemen.[120] Apparently, these are highly exaggerated figures. Vincent Smith writing about Chandragupta Maurya's army remarks that "incredible though they (the figures of its strength) may seem at first sight, they are justified by our knowledge of the unwieldy hosts used in war by Indian kings in later ages. For instance, Nunez, the Portuguese chronicler, who was contemporary with Krishna Deva, the Raja of Vijaynagar, in the sixteenth century (1509-29 AD), affirms that that prince led against Raichur an army consisting of 703,000 foot, 42,700 horse, and 551 elephants, besides camp followers.[121]

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* it appears that recruitment to various wings of the army was open to all castes and classes. We have already noticed that Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and agriculturists held responsible posts in the army and even the low caste Chandalas and dombas took to military service. Kashmir kings frequently recruited soldiers from the martial tribes of the Punjab and Frontier provinces. Lalitaditya is said to have Turuska or Central Asian soldiers in his army. Harsa had several officers and troops from Muhammadanised Turks.

Weapons were manufactured in State factories, though the

117. Ibid., iv-475-79.
118. Lawrence *The Valley of Kashmir*, p.255.
119. *Raj.*, iv-407.
120. Ibid., v-143-44.
121. *Early History of India*, p. 132.

manufacture of ordinary arms by the people was not banned altogether. The State maintained armouries for the regular supply of arms to troops.[122] It appears that the army was in direct employ of the king and the soldiers and officers received their monthly salaries from the royal treasury. During a march outside their cantonment, the troops were entitled to a allowance.[123] Jayapida had to institute a mobile treasury and accounts office for the troops on the march *(calaganja)*.[124] There was a special officer to procure and store fodder for the horses[125] and another to look after the uniform and equipment of the soldiers.[126] Like the soldiers of Napoleon, the ranks in the Kashmir army wore red trousers.[127]

Strategy in Warfare

References to, and descriptions of, actual warfare are numerous in the *Rajatarangini*. Particularly interesting is the detailed account of Jayapida's capture in Nepal, his escape from close confinement and the subsequent assault of the Kashmir troops on the fort. We have also accounts of sieges laid to and defence of, impregnable forts of Lohara, Dugdhghata and Sirahsila in Kashmir. Interesting light is thrown on the strategy employed by various commanders in conducting their campaigns. For instance when Dhanya the commander of Jayasimha's forces laid siege to the fort of Sirahsila, the seat of a rebel Damara, he created block-houses and also wooden sheds for his own troops under the protecting cover of arrows from a contingent posted on commanding positions on the hill. During night the besieging forces used so to light up the ground around the castle that "even an ant could not have moved out by the main road without being noticed." For its water-supply, the castle depended either on the rivulet to its east or on the river. From the former the besieged were at once cut off when Dhanya occupied the higher ridge to the south, and at the same time naturally also the eastern bank of the rivulet. The siege was so severe and effective that very soon the garrison had to surrender.[128]

The element of surprise was always resorted to by the military commanders. When for instance, Tunga, the commander-in-chief of

122. *Raj.*, viii-257.
123. Ibid., vii-1457
124. Ibid., iv-589
125. Ibid., iii-489
126. Ibid., vii-365
127. Ibid., viii-1883
128. *Raj.*, viii-2580.

Didda's forces, was severely punished by the forces of the chief of Rajauri in a battle in a defile, he led a small force and "suddenly penetrated into Rajauri by another route and burnt it down entirely." This diversion not only gave him complete victory, but he was able to extricate his forces caught up in the defile.[129]

Similarly Sussala's Damara supporters who being themselves mostly on foot and afraid of facing the royal cavalry in the open plain,traversed a longer and difficult path skirting the mountains; and taking the king's forces by surprise captured the forts in the suburbs of Srinagar.[130]

The soldiers arraigned in the battlefield vied with one another in showing their willingness to fight. The impatient soldiers got, so to say, intoxicated by the noise of kettle-drums and the battle cries of their comrades. We have a vivid picture of a battle scene in the *Rajatarangini* of Srivara, of its 'mighty clash of arms providing the thunder of applause':

> "The soldiers called out to one another saying 'come', 'stand here', 'where do you go', 'you are mine'. The setting sun behind the Kashmirians shone on the points of their swords, as if to assure them of victory. Eager for fame, the warriors moved in the field of battle, each trying to go first, even like bees in the garden, eager for flowers. soldiers showed the movements of their bodies by their various postures, even as actors do in a dance on the stage. Arrows poured forth like rain from the cloud-like army whose arms flashed like lightning, and whose sound was like the sound the thunder."[131]

The soldiers had to live in encampments and their life was hard and rigorous. And yet they had ample opportunity for festivity and merry-making. Kalhana says that during the expedition of Lalitaditya the soldiers enjoyed the wine of palm trees after their victories in the South.[132] They also brought back riches when they returned to their homes. But it is not always that victorious Kashmir arms were carried to distant places. Often the Valley was attacked by hostile kings and chiefs from across the border, and the army was called upon to beat them back.

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129. *Raj.*, vi-348-53.
130. *Raj.*, vii-1374.
131. Dutt, *Kings of Kashmir*, p. 295
132. *Raj.*, iv-155.

Fortifications

This reminds us of the frontier and internal defences of Kashmir. As already mentioned the rulers of Kashmir took particular care to set up watch-stations on the passes leading into Kashmir and built forts on commanding positions there. The art of fortification was highly developed.

The forts were so planned as to be able to stand a prolonged siege. Tanks were built for storing water and where this was not possible on account of hard rock and granite, arrangements were made to store snow in pits.[133] These forts were garrisoned by small detachments of trusted troops under the command of an officer called *Kotapadati*. They corresponded to the *Killadar* troops kept up in small detachments until a few years ago for the garrisoning of the numerous small forts in the hill-regions around Kashmir. These troops were permanently settled in particular forts, and generally held land in their neighbourhood.[134]

In the Valley proper there were forts of two types — land forts and water forts. The land forts were generally built on spurs of hills or on *Karewas*. As an instance of water fort we have the one built by Jayapida in his new town of Jayapura. Called *Abhyantara Kotta* (modern Andarkot) or the 'Inner Castle', it occupied a strong position being situated on a plateau surrounded on all sides by water.[135] It was here that Kota Rani, the last Hindu ruler, was besieged by and surrendered to the forces of Shah Mir.

During the troubled days of the later Karkota kings and after, we find the Damara lords building their castles at their seats, and from there defying the writ of the king. These Damaras came to be designated as Kotta (castle) Rajas and Kalhana and the later Chroniclers are full of descriptions, often humorous, of the way they vaunted authority in their fiefs.

Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, has from ancient times been its political and cultural centre. Strangely enough, it has had no fortifications, except perhaps the fort on the Hari Parbat hill which was built as recently as the middle of the 18th century.

"We can," says Stein, "attribute this exceptional position of Srinagar to the great natural advantages of its site........ The frequent sieges which Srinagar underwent during the last reigns related by

133. *Raj.*, vii-1172-75.
134. Drew, *Jummoo*, p. 95.
135. *Raj.*, iv-506-11.

Kalhana, give us ample opportunity to appreciate the military advantages of the position of the city. With the exception of the comparatively narrow neck of high ground in the north, the city on the right river bank is guarded on all sides by water. On the south the river forms an impassable line of defence. The east is secured by the Dal Lake and the stream which flows from it. On the west there stretch the broad marshes of the Anchar Lake close to the bank of the Vitasta."[136]

Revenue and Expenditure

To meet the expenses of maintaining a large standing army, as well as of the civil services, the king resorted to taxation of various kinds. The sources of revenue tapped were many and varied. As the economy of Kashmir depended mainly on agriculture, the revenue derived from land was the major item of the income of the government. The *Rajatarangini* is silent on the rate of taxation, but it may be assumed that in normal times the proportion was one-sixth of the produce as the share of the government. This increased to one-half during the times of the later kings. In one instance we learn that the king took away even the cultivators' share of the produce for three consecutive years.[137] There is no indication of a proper settlement of land revenue, but the mention of the office of *Gramakayastha* or village accountant and of the *Skandaka* the modern Lambardar, indicates that there must have existed some sort of record showing what a man's holdings in land amounted to, and what his revenue liabilities were.

The land revenue seems to have been reckoned from early times in grain as is proved beyond all doubt by the detailed account of Abul Fazal, which shows that the revenue administration in Kashmir was similar in the Hindu times as well. In a territory isolated by great mountain barriers like Kashmir, such a system based on the staple produce of the state and the main foodstuff of its inhabitants, must have specially recommended itself by its stability.

Over and above the land revenue, the cultivators had to pay other taxes, both direct and indirect. In realising the land revenue in rice or other produce, it was easy for the king's officials to systematically defraud the cultivator by the use of wrong weights.[138] Samkaravarman levied contributions for the monthly pay of the *Skandaka* and the *Gramakayastha* from the villagers. This levy seems to have continued

136. Trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II. p. 445.
137. *Raj.*, iv-628.
138. *Raj.*, v-171.

down to the beginning of the present century, as in the statement in Lawrence's *Valley* of taxes levied from a Kashmiri village, we find in addition to the regular assessment, a 'Patwari tax', a 'Kanungo tax' and a 'Tax on account of establishment.'

Samkaravarman instituted the system of levying *begar* (forced labour) from the villagers, originally for transport purposes, and later for fiscal extortion. Villagers, it appears, who did not run up to carry their allotted load, were fined at enhanced rates, and the same fine was levied the following year a second time from the village as a whole. Kalhana mentions 13 kinds of *begar* which a villager could be called upon to render to the king. Though they are not specified, they possibly included, like the *Kar-i-Begar* of the last century, various requisitions for village produce free of payment, which could be made by officials.[139]

Besides the revenue from land, the kings levied direct taxes of all sorts from town and city dwellers, from artificers and market shops. Jayapida resorted to several exactions, but his officials "carried off all property of the subjects while delivering only the smallest fraction of what they realised."[140] During the reign of Ajitapida, his chief minister, Utpala, carried away the revenue realisations collected by three departments of revenue and created another for the maintenance of the king.[141] Samkaravarman established two new revenue offices called *Attapatibhaga* and *Grahakritya* ('domestic affairs'). The collection of revenue from a variety of direct taxes was entrusted to the former and the latter was responsible for collection of revenue from 'deducting or adding to the due weights, from fines and similar imposts.[142] They may also have possible included fees at certain domestic events, such as marriages, *Yagnopavita*, etc.[143] To assist the officer in charge of *Grahakritya*, had appointed five secretaries *(divira)* as also a treasurer *(ganjavara)*. Chakravarman who on his restoration to the throne in 935 AD had to pay heavy bribes to his supporters. The Tantrin foot soldiers, resorted to heavy taxation through the officials of *Aksapatala* and *Grahkritya*, but the people having been reduced to the lowest depths of poverty could not pay these additional levies.[144]

139. Ibid., v-174.
140. Ibid., iv-629.
141. Ibid., iv-691.
142. *Raj.*, v-176.
143. Ibid., viii-1428.
144. Ibid., v-302.

King Yasaskara appointed four city-prefects *(Nagaradhikara)* in order to increase his revenue by the contributions they had to offer by competition. The officials had, of course, to recoup themselves by increased exactions from the citizens.[145] The variety of taxes and fines that they used to collect can be estimated from the fact that they levied fines even "on householders in the case of immoral conduct on the part of a married woman and on persons alleged to have had carnal intercourse with dancing girls who had been received into households as wedded wives."[146]

With the increasing instability of administration during and after the tenth century AD, and the consequent impoverishment of the people, the revenue receipts naturally dwindled, and we find the kings and their zealous ministers instituting new and more unjust methods of taxation. Under Abhimanyu (958-972 AD) when Didda was the regent, the officer-in-charge of the treasury named Sindhu, created new imposts and thus "became the founder of the revenue-office called after him *Sindhuganja.*"[147]

The condition of the people was deplorable during the reign of Harsa. Given to extravagant expenditure on his court and personal enjoyment, and "upon various corps of his army", he stooped to all means of collecting funds to meet these expenses. "O shame!" writes Kalhana in indignation, "though he possessed his grandfather's and father's treasures and those which Utkarsa at the commencement of his reign had brought from Lohara, and though he had confiscated from the temples the riches bestowed by former kings, yet he endeavoured to secure more wealth by oppressing the house-holders. " He levied new imposts through several 'prefects of property' *(nayaka)* who "seized property of all sorts". All imaginable classes of trade and manufacture were taxed, so much so that he "appointed also a `prefect for night soil' to raise revenue."[148] The people who evaded payment were tormented by his officials who inflicted heavy fines "as if a boulder were thrown on an old bullock which has become worn out by dragging the plough."[149]

It seems that during the comparatively peaceful reign of Jayasimha, some of these imposts were abolished, but not before an outburst of popular anger. The Brahmins of Avantipur held a solemn fast against

145. Ibid., vi-70.
146. Ibid., viii-3336.
147. Ibid., vi-266.
148. *Raj.*, vii-1100-1107.
149. Ibid., 1225-26.

the policy of the powerful minister Chitaratha, who was increasing the imposts. But this made no impression on the obstinate minister. Finally, a Brahmin youth named Vijayaraja, Kalhana's contemporary, taking recourse to terrorist methods, attacked Chitaratha with a dagger and grievously injured him. "Vijayaraja disdained to flee although he could have done so, announced that he had stabbed the minister, and was killed bravely fighting against odds as an act of supreme sacrifice."[150]

There is no indication in the *Rajatarangini* of the amount of revenue collected by the kings of Kashmir from land and other sources. Considering the huge amounts spent by the kings and queens on dress and jewellery, and the magnificent temples and palaces erected by them, it seems to have been considerable. The army and the civil service were besides, a great drain on the revenues as also the several expeditions against neighbouring principalities. Often, the king of Kashmir had to pay subsidies to them.

We also learn from several passages in the Chronicles that some enlightened kings like Lalitaditya and Avantivarman undertook extensive irrigation projects. Suyya's expenditure on clearing the bed of the Jhelum at Baramula of rocks and silt, has already been indicated.[151] It seems that large amounts were also spent on the maintenance of roads and bridges.[152] Public bath-houses on the Jhelum in Srinagar were also built by the government.[153] There is mention at several places of schools and hospitals as well as the public rest houses set up by the kings.[154]

Large stipends and scholarships were paid to outstanding poets and authors, as also to artists, musicians and dancers. Udbhatta, Jayapida's Chief Pandit, was paid a sum of 100,000 *dinaras* as his daily allowance.[155] Similarly, heavy subsidies like those paid to Sahi princes who lived at the court of king Ananta, constituted a serious drain on the royal treasury.[156]

Agricultural Production

With its fertile soil and abundance of water-supply, Kashmir has

150. Pandit, *The River of Kings*, p. 602.
151. *Raj.*, v-84-117.
152. Ibid., iii-354; vii-909, 1539; vii-482.
153. Ibid., viii-2423.
154. Ibid., ii-58; iii-461, 480, Vol. II, p. 395.
155. *Raj.*, iv-495.
156. Ibid., vii-144

been from ancient times depending mainly on agriculture as the principal source of food and wealth. The Valley was dotted with numerous villages and, according to Kalhana, the villagers were wholly absorbed in agriculture.[157]

The chief crop to the cultivation of which the agriculturists devoted their labour and time was rice. Its character as the main cereal is sufficiently emphasised by the fact that Kalhana refers to it by the simple term of *dhanya*, 'grain' — a term by which paddy is known in Kashmir even at the present time. Cultivation of rice pre-supposes abundance of irrigational facilities which exist in the Valley. The novel and elaborate contrivances by which water taken from rivers and streams is distributed over the rice-fields seem to have existed in one form or the other from ancient times. That there are definite indications of an elaborate system of irrigation having been present proves further the antiquity of rice cultivation in the Valley. It appears that all available land on the hill sides, *karewas* and low-lying tracts by the marshes, must have been under cultivation.

That there was a greater pressure on land in olden times due to the swelling population is attested to by "traces of old irrigation-cuts long ago abandoned which brought down the water of the melting snows from alpine plateaus high above the forest zone. Their distance from any lands capable of rice cultivation is so great, and the trouble of their construction must have been so considerable that only a far greater demand for irrigation than the present one can account for their existence."[158]

The fact that the destruction of rice crops always resulted in scarcity and famine shows that rice was the staple food of the people. According to Marco Polo (13th century AD), rice was the principal food of the people of Kashmir.[159] The seed was sown in the month of Chaitra (March)[160] and by the month of Bhadra (September) the fields were covered with ripened paddy.[161] The fields had to be properly ploughed up before sowing of seeds and oxen were employed for tillage.[162] Harvesting was done in the month of Asvina (October) after which the ceremony of new crops *(navana)* was performed.[163] We have an interesting reference which closely resembles the modern practice

157. Ibid., vi-9.
158. Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 427-28.
159. Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. I, p. 166.
160. *Nilamatpurana*, 529-41.
161. *Raj.*, ii-18, v-270, viii-770, 795.
162. Ibid, iv-347.
163. *Nilamatpurana*, 748-754.

among householders of drying their paddy in the sun before husking in the story of the Naga maiden who married a Brahmin youth and who was watching her paddy spread on the ground to dry.[164]

Besides rice we have evidence of the cultivation of barley and pulses too. These crops, according to the *Nilamatpurana*, ripened in the month of Jyesta (June). The pulses consisted of several varieties such as gram *(chana)*, lentil *(masur)* and blackgram *(mung)*.

Fruit cultivation seems to have been practised in Kashmir from ancient times. We have mention of grapes and grape-gardens in the *Rajatarangini*. Grapes "which were scarce even in heaven were common in Kashmir." The town of Martanda, for instance, was "swelling with grapes" during Lalitaditya's time.[165] Bilhana when singing of the beauties of his homeland mentions grapes growing in abundance in the Valley.[166] Apple *(palevata)* was also cultivated.[167] Heun Tsiang who visited Kashmir in the seventh century AD remarks that Kashmir 'produced abundant fruits and flowers'. Among the fruits grown were the pear *(li)*, the wild plum *(nai)*, the peach *(t'au)*, the apricot *(hang* or *mui)* and the grape *(po-tau)*.[168]

The cultivation of saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir from ancient times. Known also as *Kashmiraja* it was, according to Kalhana, one of the five things for which Kashmir was famous, and the privilege of royalty to use it as a scented salve or emollient. Saffron was also used as an ingredient in Greek medicine and cuisine and it continues to be so used in Kashmir. In the *Nilamatpurana*, we often find references to *kumkum* (saffron) and Bilhana testifies to its growth in the Valley.[169] The legend about its origin connects it with the plateau of Padmapura (Pampore) where the first bulb was planted by the famous physician, Wagbhatta, who received it as a gift from Naga Takshaka on his being cured of an eye disease. The elaborate method of its cultivation in well-prepared beds seems to have been followed from ancient times.

Kuth *(Saussrea Lappa)* which is an important forest product, though not cultivated as such, was also used in medicine and incense. So was *dhupa*, another forest by-product from which an incense was prepared for use in worship. Kalhana has several references to *dhupa*, which seems to have been an article of trade among the

164. *Raj.*, i-246.
165. Ibid., iv-192.
166. *Vikram*, xviii, 72.
167. *Raj.*, vi-356.
168. Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, Vol. I, p. 88.
169. *Vikram*, xviii-72.

Brahmin priests in the temples of Kashmir.[170]

Irrigation

In the earliest traditions recorded by Kalhana, the construction of irrigation canals plays a significant role. The Suvarnmankulya (modern Sunmankul) which is ascribed to king Suvarna and which still brings water to a great part of the Advin Pargana is of great antiquity.[171] The reference to the aqueduct by which king Damodara is supposed to have attempted to bring water to the plateau named after him, though legendary in the main, is also characteristic.[172] Lalitaditya is credited with having supplied to villages near Chakradhara (modern Tsakadar) with irrigation facilities by the erection of water-wheels *(araghatta)* which lifted water from the Jhelum.[173]

We have already noticed the vast irrigation and flood protection works completed by Avantivarman's engineer-minister, Suyya (Chapter five). He is said to have "embellished all regions with an abundance of irrigated fields which were distinguished for excellent produce." The increase in the produce of rice and other crops following these measures, and the reclamation of new land from river and marshes lowered the average price of rice from 200 to 36 *dinaras* per *Khari* (176 lbs).[174]

Land Tenure

The immemorial tradition in Kashmir considered all land as the property of the ruler, and those who cultivated it as his tenants. This explains the innumerable grants of *agraharas* or *jagirs* to favourite officials and ministers by several kings and queens and the endowment of villages for the maintenance of temples and hospices.[175] This practice of granting *jagirs* is perhaps responsible for the growth of the Damara landlords who played an important role in the politics of Kashmir during the rule of the later Hindu kings. Land granted to these barons and also to temples was, it seems, tenanted by small cultivators who, after deducting the State's share of the produce had to surrender an-

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170. *Raj.*, ii-122; viii-143.
171. Ibid., i-97.
172. Ibid., i-156.
173. Ibid., iv-191.
174. Ibid., v-116.
175. Ibid., i-87,88,90,96,98,100,175,307,311,314,343; ii-55; iii-376, 481; iv-9,639; v-23,24,170,397,403,442; vi-89,336; vii-182,184,185,608,898,899,908; viii-2408,2419,2420,3355.

other share to the landlords or to the managers of religious endowments.

We can deduce this from a significant verse in the *Rajatarangini* where Kalhana mentions the resumption of the land grants to temples by Samkaravarman, on the understanding that a fixed amount should be returned in compensation from the revenue of these villages. The land of these villages was subsequently taken under direct fiscal arrangement, which made it easy to reduce the compensatory allotment. The practice of some tracts of land being directly farmed by the State continues till today.[176]

A Damara's relations between the king on the one hand and the tenant on the other, cannot be traced clearly from the Chronicles. Some of the Damaras are said to have obtained revenue from their land, apparently their tenants.[177] There is also no record of the conditions under which a tenant of the State held his land. It is doubtful that he ever owned land as such, but probably he could transfer his rights to another on payment of cash. In the cities, we have definite evidence to prove, property was owned by the citizens who could sell or purchase it. King Yasaskara while deciding the property case of a Brahmin had to examine the sale-deed of a house wherein he discovered a fraudulent interpolation by the Registrar of real estate sale deeds.[178] The office of Aksapatala comprised also the Record Office or archives where ali documents pertaining to transfer of property were recorded by a special officer *(Pattopadhyaya)*.[179]

Industries and Professions

Though agriculture formed the main occupation of the inhabitants of the Valley, it appears there were several industries which gave employment to a fair proportion of the population. The most notable of these were the manufacture of textiles, leather goods, and jewellery. There were also sculptors, woodworkers and potters.

Both woollen and cotton textiles were produced in ancient Kashmir. Apart from the depiction of finely-clad figures on the terracotta tiles unearthed at Harwan, there is the direct evidence of Heun Tsiang who records that the people of Kashmir wore clothes of white linen. "Their garments are made of Kaiu-She-Ye (Kansheya) and of cotton.

176. *Raj.*, v-170-71.
177. Ibid., vii-495.
178. Ibid., vi-30.
179. Ibid., v-301,397.

Kaiu-She Ye is the product of the wild silk worm. They have garments also of Ts'o-mo (Kshaumo) which is a sort of hemp; garments also made of Kien-po-lo (Kambala) which is woven from fine goat hair; garments also made from Ho-la-li (Karala) — this stuff is made from the fine hair of wild animals; it is seldom this can be woven, and therefore the stuff is very valuable and it is regarded as fine clothing."[180]

Thus we find the existence of a kind of silk industry in Kashmir in ancient times. In the Sabha Parva of the *Mahabharata* mention is made of a "thread spun by worms" among the many presents offered to Yudhisthira by a feudatory prince from the north-western side of the Himalayas, presumably Kashmir. We find an echo of its antiquity in Mirza Haider Dughlat's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (1540 AD) wherein he records that "among the wonders of Kashmir are the number of mulberry trees cultivated for their leaves for the production of silk."

The Ho-la-li (Karala) of Heun Tsiang definitely refers to *pashmina* or cloth made out of fine wool *(pashm)* of the shawl goat. The history of this industry goes to remote antiquity. When the Kashmiris took to it is not known, but a mention of shawls is made in the *Mahabharata*. Besides shawls, several kinds of blankets were also manufactured. Kshemendra's *Narmamala* and *Samayamatrika* have several references to these blankets. The chief centre of woollen manufacture was Pattan which had also a market for the sale of sheep and cattle.[181]

Smithery, of course, exists in Kashmir from ancient times. With agriculture as the main occupation of the people and with a large standing army of the kings always eager to launch conquering expeditions out of the Valley, there must have been a roaring business for the blacksmith. Besides, cooking vessels and other utensils were made of brass and copper. Ancient images in brass and copper of gods and goddesses have been discovered during excavations and this also pre supposes the existence of a highly advanced industry of casting and moulding metals.

Closely associated with the metal industry was that of pottery. Excavations carried out at Burzahom by De Terra and his party have revealed a large quantity of earthenware. While the lower culture yielded a type of highly polished blackware and potsherds with incised geometric designs assignable to a period ranging from 3000 to 1800 BC, the upper culture layer was found to contain potsherds belonging to the same Buddhist period as Harwan, which represents

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180. Beal, Vol. I, pp. 75, 76. Karala is *pashmina*.
181. *Raj.*, v-162.

the fourth century AD. At Avantipura a large number of huge jars for storing grain and other vessels have been recovered. Similarly we have the fine specimens of Gandhara art in terracotta heads discovered at Ushkur in the Valley and Akhnur in Jammu. We have mention by Kshemendra of earthen rings worn by women of Kashmir as also a reference by Kalhana to a potter-woman. This indicates the existence of a highly developed and flourishing industry.

It seems Kashmir was also fairly advanced in glass manufacture, particularly bangles. In the *Rajatarangini* it is stated that the merchant Padmaraja regularly despatched to king Bhoja of Malwa, the water of Papasudana *tirtha* filled in large glass jars. A quantity of ancient glass fragments was found strewn on the road leading to the spring of Papasudana from the village of Kother.

Goldsmiths must have, of course, flourished in ancient Kashmir. Considering the numerous references in the *Rajatarangini* to gold bangles, armlets, rings and other ornaments worn by kings, queens and nobles, the goldsmith must have always had a busy time, particularly when the fashions in these changed from time to time.

Similarly the presence of numerous ruins of old temples with exquisite sculpture, fluted columns and trefoil arches, leaves no doubt to the existence in ancient Kashmir of a large number of masons and sculptors. Most of the temple buildings were no doubt in stone, but the cities and towns were, as now, built in timber. The mention of several devastating fires which burnt Srinagar and other towns to ashes, clearly indicates the use of timber in building. Naturally the carpenter and woodworker had a flourishing trade. Building of boats, palanquins and manufacture of household furniture were also some of the items for which the services of a carpenter were in demand.

Besides these, there must have flourished other minor industries too. There are references to gardeners, fishermen, garland-makers, barbers, teachers, and *Vaidyas* or physicians. There were copper and iron mines which must have given employment to a good number of workers.[182]

Trade and Commerce

Ancient Kashmir had, as we have already noted, far flung political and cultural contacts with distant corners of India, with Central Asia and Tibet and with China. Under Asoka and later Kaniska, Kashmir

182. *Raj.*, iv-616-17,

became part of vast empires and being geographically situated at a central and strategic position in Asia, it became the meeting place of caravans from the plains of India and from distant cities in Central Asia.

Besides this entrepot trade, Kashmir also exported its own products particularly woollen goods, saffron and Kuth (costus) and small quantities of silk. The demand for the Kashmirian saffron in Indian markets was very great in ancient times. In Harsa's *Ratnavali* we have a reference to saffron of Kashmir being preferred to the saffron grown in the country of the Parasikas and Bahlikas. Heun Tsiang noticed woollens being worn by the inhabitants of the northern regions of India. Kashmir being a centre of woollen manufacture must have had a brisk export trade in this commodity. As the wool for the manufacture of shawls comes from the highland of Tibet, the trade with that country has therefore an ancient origin. The shawl is made of very fine, soft, short, flossy underwool called *keli phumb* or wool of *kel* (shawl goat), a variety of caprahircus, inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. These regions, owing to their high altitude, are intensely cold and nature has clothed the goats with this warm wool. The higher the goats live, the finer and warmer is their wool. The finest wool comes from the markets of Turfan, the collection centre of wool from the goats of Tien Shen mountains. The wool traders exchanged their raw wool for manufactured shawl goods and sold them advantageously in various markets of Central Asia, wherefrom they were carried to famous cities of Asia and Europe.[183]

That wool was one of the essential commodities of trade in Kashmir is evident from a passage in the *Rajatarangini* where Kalhana quoting the high prices of goods during the famine under Harsa, mentions besides that of rice, the staple food of Kashmiris, the price of wool.[184] Thus whereas raw *pashm* or shawl wool formed an important item of import, the manufactured woollen goods were the principal articles of export.[185]

On account of difficulty of transport, fruits do not seem to have been exported though we may assume grapes to have been sent out of the Valley to markets in northern India. We have an echo of this in the *Ain-i-Akbari* where Abul Fazal mentions that "Kashmirians bring grapes on their backs in long baskets."[186] It is but natural that this fruit must have

183. Koul, *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 21
184. *Raj.*, vii-1221.
185. *Ain-i-Akbari*, i-p. 65.
186. *Raj.*, i-42.

been in great demand, either fresh or in dried form.

Among other articles of import were salt,[187] spices[188] and cotton and silk piecegoods from the rest of India.[189] Besides, we can safely assume the import of precious metals and copper and brass for coinage, etc. Marco Polo mentions that coral which was carried from the western parts of the world, had a better sale in Kashmir.[190]

Internal trade in the Valley was confined to foodgrains, cattle, agricultural implements, earthenware and metallic vessels, and minor agricultural and industrial products. That Kashmiris of ancient times had well developed commercial sense is amply proved by references in the *Rajatarangini* to markets (hatta) in different cities of Kashmir.[191] The principal centres of trade in the Valley were the cities of Puranadisthana, Huskapura, Pravarapura, Parihaspura, etc.

Most of the internal trade in the Valley was carried by the river Jhelum and its tributaries. That from ancient times the boats were the principal means of transport and travel is shown by the frequent references to river journeys, boats and boat bridges and *ghats* or landing places in the Chronicle of Kalhana.[192] A striking passage in the *Rajatarangini* brings it out clearly. When king Kalasa, who was staying at Vijayeswara wished to pass his last days at the temple of Martand he "was carried by the water-route in boats, along with his ministers and seraglio" from there to the nearest ghat or landing place of Martand, presumably modern Khanabal.[193]

The import and export trade of the Valley was carried by the various routes leading to the rest of India and Central Asia, Tibet and China. The frontier watch-stations (*dranga*) on the mountain passes over which most of the trade routes passed, also served as customs posts (*Sulkasthana*) where officials known as *Saulkikas* realised duties on goods imported into or exported from the Valley. This is borne out by a dramatic passage in the Rajatarangini. Kostesvara, a Damara lord in order to realise the ransom promised by the Chief of Lohara for handing over his opponent, Lothana, took a drastic step. "Imprisoning the officials he collected the customs at the watch-

187. Kshemendra, *Narmamala*, I-127
188. *Raj.*, viii-1221.
189. *Kuttanimata Kavya*, 343.
190. Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. I, p. 167.
191. *Raj.*, i-201-2; iv-208.
192. See *Raj.*, v-84; vii-347, 714, 1628.
193. Ibid., vii-714.

station (dranga) and had his own name stamped in red-lead on the wares as if he were the king."[194]

That trade with the rest of India was highly remunerative is proved by several references in the Chronicle to rich merchants come to Kashmir from India. During the reign of Pratapaditya II, for instance, "the land was full of merchants of different wares come from all regions."[195] Some of them had houses as rich in decoration and luxury as the palace of the king. During the reign of Ananta, a merchant from India was entrusted by king Bhoja of Malwa to build a wall round the spring at Kapateswara and also to send its holy water to him every day in glass jars. He also supplied betel leaves to king Ananta and by trading in different commodities became so rich that when Ananta was in financial trouble he "became the king's creditor and took from him a diadem which was adorned with five resplendent crescents and the throne, as a security for money which was due to him.[196] Similarly a clever merchant, Jayyaka by name, "by selling victuals as a trader to far off regions, accumulated wealth, and became in course of time a rival to the lord of wealth (Kubera)."[197]

But generally the merchant class, and more particularly those carrying on petty trade and banking, seem to have become unpopular through their fraudulent transactions. This is accountable only by the decline in foreign trade during the later period of Hindu rule, when the trading class had very limited field for its activity.

Currency and Weights

In the numerous passages of the *Rajatarangini*, the later Chronicles of Jonaraja and Srivara, and in the *Lokaprakasa* of Kshemendra, we find references to the term *dinara* while stating the prices of commodities, amounts of salaries and the like.[198] It no doubt denotes the currency of the kingdom from ancient times. This word is well known to Sanskrit lexicography as the designation of a gold-coin. But in ancient Kashmir *dinara* appears to have been a mere abstract unit of account.

A comparison of tables of prices given by Abul Fazal and of the

194. Ibid., viii-2010.
195. *Raj.*, iv-11.
196. *Raj.*, vii-195.
197. *Raj.*, vii-495.
198. For a detailed discussion on the monetary system of ancient Kashmir see Stein, 'Notes on the Monetary System of Ancient Kashmir,' *Numismatic Chronicle*, xix, p.p. 125-74 from which the present information has been culled.

tradition surviving till recent times in Kashmir, with the data of the *Rajatarangini* and the later texts, clearly shows that the currency of Kashmir, at least from the ninth century onwards, was based on a decimal system of values starting from a very small unit. The values which can be shown to have been actually used in reckoning, are given in Table 1 with their Sanskrit and modern designations:

Table 1

12 *dinaras*	= 1 Dvadasa ("Twelver"), *Bahagni*
2 *Dvadasa*	= 25 *dinaras* or 1 Panchivimsatika, ("Twenty-fiver") *Puntsu.*
4 Panchivimsatika	= 100 *dinaras* or 1 Saṭa ("Hundreder"), *Hath.*
10 Satas	= 1,000 *dinaras* or 1 Sahasra ("Thousander") *Sasun.*
100 Sahasra	= 1,00,000 *dinaras* or 1 Laksa, *Lachh.*
100 Laksa	= 1,00,00,000 *dinaras* or 1 Koti, *Crore.*[199]

The Table 2 shows the coins which can be assumed to have represented monetary values of the above description at successive periods together with their metal and weight. The equivalent values for Akbar's time, calculated on Abul Fazal's estimate, are shown in a separate column.

Table 2

Value in dinaras	*Designa-tion*	*Early Hindu coins (up to AD 855)*	*Later Hindu coins (from AD 855 onwards)*	*Muham-madan coins*	*Equivalent values on Abul Fazal's estimate*
12	Dvadasa (*Bahagni*)	...	Æ 45 grs.	...	1/8 Dam or 1/320 Rupee
25	Panchivi-msatika (*Puntsu*)	Æ 110 grs	Æ 91 grs.	... Æ 83 grs.	1/4 Dam or 1/160 Rupee
100	Sata (*Hath*)	...	...	...	1 Dam or 1/40 Rupee
500	...	...	AR 23.5 grs.	...	5 Dams or 1/8 Rupee
1,000	Sahasra (*sasun*)	...	...	...	10 Dams or 1/4 Rupee
2,500	...	AR 120 grs.	...	...	25 Dams or 25/40 Rupee
12,500	...	...	AV 73 grs.	...	125 Dams or 25/8 Rupees
100,000	Laksa (*Lachh*)	...	...	...	25 Rupees
10,000,000	Koti (*Crore*)	...	...	...	2,500 Rupees

199. The term *dinara* (modern *dyar*) as conveying a sense of "money" has been in general use in Kashmir from ancient times to the present day.

The table shows that the only denomination of coins which can be traced throughout, is the copper coin representing 25 dinaras. Taking into consideration also the vast preponderance of these coins in quantity, the old currency of Kashmir must be described as one in copper.

But if the *dinara* was more than a mere abstract unit of accounts it could not well have been represented by any other token than the *cowree.* For the weight of copper which would correspond to the twenty-fifth part of a Panchavimsatika viz 91/25 or 3.54 grs. is manifestly too small for a real coin. No copper pieces of this diminutive size have been ever found in Kashmir.

That the *cowree* was from early times used as a monetary token in Kashmir as elsewhere in India, is amply shown by Kalhana's work. He names in a characteristic fashion the lowest and highest monetary values when he speaks of king Samgramadeva who, starting with a *cowree* (varataka) had amassed crores.[200] Similarly Kshemendra humorously describes the miserly trader, who in the evening after fleecing his customers, is with difficulty induced to give three *cowrees* to his household.[201]

What was the value of a *cowree* in terms of *dinara* currency in ancient times is difficult to find out from the scanty material we have at our disposal, but from the popular reckoning in Kashmir surviving till the beginning of the present century, *Bahagni* was equal to eight *cowrees* and the *Puntsu* to 16.

Besides the *cowree* and the copper coins of *Puntsu*, etc, we find in ancient Kashmir another medium of exchange, namely rice. Considering the paramount importance which this grain, the staple produce of the Valley, has at all times possessed for the material condition of its inhabitants, it is only natural that it should have played its part as a subsidiary currency in Kashmir. By far the greatest portion of the land revenue being assessed and collected in *kharis* (modern *kharwar*) of grain, it necessarily follows that government payments were made in grain, giving it the sanctity and stamp of regular currency.[202]

It should not, however, be presumed from the above that there was no metallic currency in circulation in ancient Kashmir. Many

200. *Raj.*, vii-112.
201. *Kalavilasa,* ii-5,7.
202. See Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir,* p. 243.

coins of the Indo-Greek and Scythian rulers have been recovered from the state.[203] During the Kushan period we find a bi-metallic currency of gold and copper in use. As Kashmir came in contact with flourishing trade centres of India and Central Asia there must have poured into the Valley enough gold to enable its rulers to strike gold coins in abundance. This metal naturally facilitated trade with foreign countries, as gold has from time immemorial been the medium of international exchange. This bi-metallic currency continued to be minted during the reign of the Kidara Kushan, though it was inferior in metal and type. A ready explanation for this debased currency is the instability and tyranny of the Hun king Mihirakula and his successors, which cut off the trade routes in northern India, thus directly affecting the normal flow of trade.

No wonder that the later Hun rulers like Toramana issued a prolific coinage in copper instead of gold and this continued perhaps till the beginning of the Karkota rule. Even though Kashmir attained great prosperity under them, we find only an electrum coinage of mixed metal which contained gold, silver and copper in different proportions. A large number of these coins have been found at as distant places as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, showing the brisk trade going on between Kashmir and the rest of India during this period.

There was again a debasement in currency during the reigns of later Karkota kings, no doubt due to the instable political conditions prevailing in the kingdom. But when under Avantivarman, Kashmir witnessed an era of consolidation and peace, we find again the mixed gold coins in circulation. Later, excepting under Harsa when in the beginning of his reign he struck gold coins, we find the Kashmir kings of the Lohara dynasty reverting to copper coinage. It appears from a critical study of *Rajatarangini* that the kings, the Damaras, rich merchants and nobility were engaged in amassing bullion in the form of ingots and heavy ornaments. King Yasaskara carried with him 2,500 gold pieces when he went to pass his last days in the temple of Vijyeswara. Kshemagupta, popularly known as Kankanavarsa (bestower of armlets), and other kings and queens had rich treasures of gold in ingot and ornaments. Sussala is recorded to have transmitted gold ingots to his treasury in the Lohara castle. The only popular form of investment was the acquisition of ornaments in gold or silver and the king had the royal privilege of "marking the gold according to colour (quality), price, etc, which served to bring to light the savings of the people."[204] But all through

203. Cunningham, *Coins of Indo-Scytheans*, p. 44.
204. *Raj.*, vii-211-12.

this period there is no evidence of gold coinage, copper coins alone being in circulation.

Apart from political instability, the main reason for withdrawal of gold from circulation was the complete breakdown of trade and commerce with the rest of India following the policy of isolation adopted by the kings of later Hindu period. Bullion ceased to enter the Valley and since there was no need of the precious metals for settling transactions with outside traders the remaining few gold coins also seem to have gone out of circulation.

The measure of weight in Kashmir has been the *khari* from time immemorial. We have reference to it in several passages of the *Rajatarangini*, Kshemendra's *Lokaprakasa* and Abul Fazal's *Ain-i-Akbari*. This ancient measure is mentioned in a hymn of the Rig-Veda (iv-32, 17) and was known to Panini. It is called *khar* in Kashmiri and *kharwar* (for *khar-bar*, ass-load) in Persian.

The division and weight of the *khari* does not appear to have changed from ancient times. According to Abul Fazl and Moorcraft (*Travels*, ii p. 135) a *khari* is equal to 1,960 Palas. Taking the latter measure as equivalent to $3\frac{5}{6}$ tolas, the *khari* corresponds to $177\frac{129}{175}$ lbs. Table 3 gives the equivalent weights of the *khari* and its subdivisions:

Table 3

$3\frac{3}{4}$ tolas	= 1 Pala		
30 Palas	= 108 tolas	= 1 *Manut*	= $2\frac{136}{175}$ lbs.
2 *Manut*	= 60 Palas	= 1 *Panzu*	
2 *Panzu*	= 120 "	= 1 *Trak*	
16 *Trak*	= 1920 "	= 1 *khari*	= $177\frac{129}{175}$ lbs.

Land measures were calculated not by length and breadth, but by the amount of seed required by certain areas for the rice cultivation. A *khari* of land — that is the rice area which is supposed to require a *khari's* weight of rice seed — exactly corresponds to four British acres.

Floods and Famines

It has already been mentioned (Chapter one) that the configuration of the Valley makes it liable to floods and naturally we find accounts of several devastating floods having caused immense damage to the crops in ancient Kashmir.

Kalhana mentions the drainage operations undertaken by Lalitaditya which reclaimed large tracts of swampy land and made them fit for

cultivation. We have references to flood protection measures in the building of stone dykes and embankments.[205]

A detailed and authentic account of famines caused by floods is given by Kalhana while describing the elaborated flood protection measures undertaken by king Avantivarman under the direction of his engineer-minister, Suyya. It is mentioned that a *khari* of rice of which the normal price was 203 *dinaras* could not be had for less than 1050 *dinaras*.[206] A harrowing account of a devastating flood which resulted in a severe famine is given while narrating the events of the rule of king Partha. In the year 917-18 AD, the "whole autumn rice crop was destroyed by a flood."[207] Under Harsa, a flood devastated the Valley in the year 1099 AD, resulting in "an extreme scarcity of all wares."[208] During the reign of Jayasimha the "land was deluged by a flood poured forth by the clouds of the rainy season, and land and water became level...... The earth became like a drinking cup filled with water instead of spirit, the trees on it immersed so that only their tops were visible."[209]

The inevitable consequence of a flood was a severe famine. But there was another cause too of the latter calamity seizing the people of Kashmir off and on. An early fall of snow would destroy the ripe autumn crop, as for instance during the time of Tunjina I, when snow fell as early as September destroying the rice crop, the staple food of the people. It is said that a divine intercession following the prayers of the queen saved the famine-stricken people form total annihilation.[210]

We have already noticed the occurrence of famines during and before the rule of Avantivarman and his measures to prevent floods, their primary cause; and also increase the area of land for cultivation. But during the rule of Partha the floods were so severe that they carried away the last grain of ripened paddy, resulting in a severe famine. Kalhana gives a pathetic picture of the people who were struck by this awful calamity:

"One could scarcely see the water in the Vitasta, entirely covered as the river was with corpses soaked and swollen by the water in

205. See *Raj.*, i-159; iii-483; v-91, 103, 120; viii-2380; Jonaraja, 404, 887; Srivara iii-191.
206. *Raj.*, v-70-71.
207. Ibid., v-271.
208. Ibid., vii-1219.
209. Ibid., viii-2786-87.
210. Ibid., ii-17.

which they had long been lying. The land became densely covered with bones in all directions. until it was like one great burial-ground, causing terror to all beings."[211]

Following the floods in the year 1099 AD, there was a severe famine in Kashmir, when "a *khari* of rice was bought for 500 *dinaras*, and two *palas* of grape-juice cost one *dinara*. A *pala* of wool was sold at six *dinaras*; of salt, pepper, asafoetida and other articles it was difficult even to hear the name." There was a fearful loss of life and "the water of the streams was covered with the dead."[212]

Man was also responsible for a severe famine in the Valley during the reign of Sussala, when the forces of the Damaras under the command of the pretender Bhiksacara besieged the city of Srinagar and set fire to its food stores which had been brought into the city in lieu of land revenue. Even "the nobles who received no money from the royal household while the king was in distress, perished also quickly, in that famine."[213]

Standard of Life

But it was not always in distress that the people of Kashmir passed their days. We have ample evidence furnished by the *Rajatarangini* and other old texts to show that the people of ancient Kashmir were of refined taste and led quite a comfortable life with good food, drink, clothes and ornaments and spacious houses.

Rice was, as now, the staple food of Kashmiris in ancient times. As mentioned earlier, *dhanya* (grain) denotes rice and a scarcity of this commodity invariably resulted in famine. We have in Kshemendra's *Narmamala* references to various preparations in rice, for example, boiled-rice, rice mixed with sugar and sugarcane juice, cakes of rice and dried ricemeal.

Barley seems to have formed the food of the poorer classes and mainly of agriculturists who bore the brunt of heavy taxation. Pulses too were an important item of food. We have mention of *chana* (gram) and lentil. A special preparation form ground *mung* was the *papara* or cake.

Vegetables seem to have been assiduously cultivated. We have mention of *aramika* or vegetable cultivator in the *Rajatarangini* and

211. Ibid., v-271-77.
212. Ibid., vii-1291-21.
213. *Raj.*, viii-1206-8.

also irrigation and manuring of vegetable gardens. Vegetables growing wild in the forests and meadows like *kachidani* and *upal-hak* also seem to have been consumed by poorer classes.[214] Mutton, however, was freely eaten. We have mention in the *Rajatarangini* of "fried meat" being taken by people. The flesh of the fowl and the ram *(kukuta* and *mesa)* and perhaps also of the goat was eaten.[215] Game birds and fish were freely consumed. Marco Polo informs us that the food of the people of Kashmir was flesh with rice and other grains.[216]

Fruit, of which there was an abundance, formed an important article of diet. Heun Tsiang mentions pear, the wild plum, the peach, the apricot and the grape as being cultivated in profusion in Kashmir.[217] Grapes were particularly valued as fruit and were also used in brewing wine. Drinking of wine seems to have been quite popular. Kalhana's Chronicle is full of references to people, men and women, who were addicted to drink. Far from being prohibited, wine seems to have been recommended specially on ceremonial occasions.[218] The wine, cooled and perfumed with flowers, was appreciated as a delicious drink.[219]

Milk undoubtedly comprised one of the principal items of diet. Cows were kept by ordinary householders. Various preparations of milk like *ghee*, butter, and curds *(dahi)* were known.[220] Honey and sugar were used to sweeten the milk and other foods.[221]

Among the spices used may be mentioned black-pepper, ginger and asafoetida. The chewing of betel leaf seems to have been a popular luxury among the rich. The king and his courtiers were ever found to be chewing the betel-leaf, which owing to prohibitive cost of transport from Central India was a mark of affluence and aristocracy.[222]

Dress and Ornaments

In the seventh century AD, Heun Tsiang gives the following

214. Ibid., v-48,49.
215. *Narmamala*, I, 124.
216. Yule, *Marco Polo*, Vol, I, p. 166.
217. *Si-yu-ki*, Vol. I, p. 88.
218. *Nilamatpurana*, 450-54.
219. *Raj.*, vii-1866-67.
220. *Nilamatpurana*, 461-68, 471-77; *Narmamala*, I 127; II, 80; *Desopadesa*, III, 32; *Raj.*, viii-137, 140.
221. *Narmamala*, I, 123, II, 80; Raj., vi-140.
222. *Raj.*, iv-427; v-365, vii-544, 787, 945, 1067.

description of the dress of North India "where the air is cold":

> "The men wind their garments round their middle, then gather under the armpits, and let them fall down across the body, hanging to the right. The robes of the women fall down to the ground; they completely cover their shoulders. On their heads the people wore caps, with flower-wreaths and jewelled necklets"[223]

From the specimens of Graeco-Gandharan sculpture unearthed at Ushkur and Akhnur, can be had an idea of the dress worn by people during and after the Kusan rule. A fine silk or cotton garment hemmed in at the middle and falling loose to the ankles was the common dress of men and women. This further corroborated by the figure depicted on terracotta tiles of the fourth century AD found at Harwan. One of the tiles has the figure of a woman carrying a flower vase, who wears a transparent robe, a kind of close fitting turban and large earrings. Another tile shows a female-dancer wearing loose robes and trousers while a third one has a figure of a female musician dressed in puffed-up trousers. Some of the male figures are dressed in loose fitting trousers and Turkman caps. All this shows a marked influence of Central Asian dress, which seems to have become the fashion after the first century AD[224]

But with the growth of influence from the plains of India during the Karkota rule, we find from the *Rajatarangini* the advent of a short jacket or blouse with half sleeves and a long lower garment, the tail end of which touched the ground.[225] A long robe hanging down the shoulders to the knees, tied up at the waist with a girdle or belt-formed the dress of menfolk. The climate of the Valley being cold, the people wore woollen garments with thick blankets in the case of poorer, and warm fine blankets in the case of rich urban classes, over the shoulders.[226] To keep themselves warm they used the Kangri *(Kasthangarika)*, firepot, under their garments.[227] We find white turbans worn by the people during the rule of later Hindu kings. Leather shoes were generally worn by men, while rich women had the fashionable "peacock shoes."[228] Wooden sandals were common.[229]

223. *Si-yu-ki*, trans. Beal, Vol. I, p. 148.
224. Kak, *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*.
225. *Raj.*, vii-930.
226. *Raj.*, iv-349-52
227. *Raj.*, v-106.462.
228. *Desopadesa*. VI
229. *Narmamala*, I, 110

The eternal fondness of women to adorn themselves with ornaments found expression in ancient Kashmir also. Kalhana mentions necklaces, wristlets, armlets, bracelets and ear-rings being the favourite ornaments of women.[230] A special type of armlet called *Valaya Kalapi* and earring called *Kanaka-nadi* have been referred to in Damodargupta's *Kuttanimata Kavya.* An armlet with the face of a peacock *(Valaya Kalapi),* a palm-shaped small ear-drop *(Kanaka-nadi)* seem to have been much in vogue. King Harsa introduced new fashions in dress and ornaments among his courtiers and queens. These included the Ketaka-leafed tiaras *(Svarna-ketakapatranka),* pendants on forehead *(Tilaka)* and golden strings at the end of locks.

Nor were the ladies backward in toilet and make-up. They used camphor, sandal and saffron as emollient and perfume.[231] They reddened the feet and lips with lac and applied collyrium to the eyes. Fashions in hairdressing seem to have been changing from time to time. *Coiffures* were decorated with flowers and gold thread.

We have a striking picture of the ornaments worn by women during the Kusan and later periods from a study of the terracotta figures found at Ushkur and other places in the kingdom. On a fragment of statuary we find an arm with a beaded armlet which seems to have been connected by a similar band with the necklace. Another forearm has a bangle round the wrist. Another fragment of a left-hand has a finger ring. A figure of Avalokiteswar from Pandrenthan shows a three-peaked diadem, and elaborately jewelled girdle. On a Visnu image found at Avantipura we find a crown with a three-peaked diadem. Kalhana mentions that king Ananta's crown had a "diadem adorned with five resplendent crescents."[232]

Houses

A critical study of the *Rajatarangini* shows the Kashmir of ancient times as full of villages and towns. From the large number of towns, villages and cities founded by kings, queens and courtiers, it appears that the kingdom was densely populated. Being a cold place, it can be easily surmised that all had a roof to live under. Whereas the kings and their courtiers had their palatial houses to live in, the masses had timber houses and huts. Even the mendicants had their own houses. A large number of *viharas*, temples, hospices and *mathas*

230. *Raj.,* v-380: vii-928-31: viii-2835.

231. *Nilamatpurana.* verse 550: *Kuttanimata Kavya* verse 101.

232. *Raj.,* vii-195.

provided shelter to the poor in society. Foreign students lived in hostels specially built for them.[233]

From the excavations conducted recently at Burzahom, we learn that the earliest inhabitants lived in pits, covered with roof of grass. But in later periods we have literary evidence of well-planned and well-laid-out towns and cities. Srinagar, originally founded by Pravarasena II, was, for instance, "provided with regularly arranged markets" and was full of "mansions which reach to the clouds."[234] In fact one of the five characteristics of Kashmir's renown was its "lofty houses."[235] The houses of the rich were built in quadrangles (*chatushala*) with large compounds in the middle. There were, as one of the tiles at Harwan depicts, balconies and verandas, and sloping roofs with lofts.[236] Urban houses were definitely better than those built in the villages.[237] The latter had courtyards surrounded by a wall and there was invariably a small garden of vegetables and fruit trees attached to it. The hut had a mud floor and the rooms were "full of mosquitoes where the seat was a place strewn with grass."[238]

Timber being available freely in the Valley, the houses were mainly built of it. Frequency of earthquakes was also responsible for general use of timber in construction. This exposed the cities and towns to the danger of fires. We have mention of several devastating fires in the *Rajatarangini*, which clearly indicates the abundant use of timber in the construction of dwelling houses in Kashmir.

Fairs and Festivals

The people celebrated a number of festivals, chief among which was the *Shivratri*. Held on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of Phalguna (Feb-March), the festivities connected with it extended to several days. The king observed the festival with great eclat and "flooded his people with presents, just as Indra floods the earth with rain at the conjunction of planets."[239] Feasts were held and dancing and singing performances given by the court artists. Poetic symposia at which outstanding compositions of poets were applauded and

233. Ibid., iii-9.
234. Ibid., iii-358-59.
235. Ibid., i-42.
236. Ibid., i-246.
237. Ibid., iv-349-52.
238. Ibid., vii-8662.
239. *Raj.*, viii-70.

their authors suitably rewarded,[240] were a regular feature.

Another important festival, still known in Kashmir, was the Indra-dvadasi, held on the 12th day of the bright half of Bhadra (September), which was the day of pilgrimage to the sacred sites of the Varahaksetra at Baramula. This was naturally a festival of universal rejoicings, coincide as it did with the ripening and harvesting of the rice crop. It was an ancient festival and combined with the *Nagayatra* held on the fourth of the same fortnight, was also a very popular one. A detailed account of its celebrations is given by Srivara in his life of Zain-ul-abidin, who himself used to take part in the festivities.[241]

An old and popular festival deriving its origin from the ancient tradition of people leaving the Valley in winter and coming back on the advent of summer, was that of *Asvayuji* held on 15th day of Asvina. Elaborate customs prescribed for this festival are given in the *Nilamatpurana*, 391 sqq. People had to amuse themselves by throwing mud at each other, by indulging in abuse and playing jokes in order to frighten away the *Pisacha* who were supposed to attempt to enter the homes of men on the day. This custom, now entirely forgotten, is comparable to the modern Holi festival and is often mentioned by Kalhana. People enjoyed this day by witnessing jugglers' performances, horse-play and exhibition of feats of strength.[242] The festival is also referred to by Alberuni.[243]

Apart from these special festivals there were many more traditional ones, like the new year's day in Chaitra, and the pilgrimages to several *tirthas* in the Valley. Alberuni mentions that Kashmiris celebrated Lalitaditya's victory over the Tibetans every year on the second of Chaitra,

The common people had also other means of amusing themselves. Strolling musicians and players, theatrical and dancing performances in the temples as well as horse-play, jugglers' shows are often mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*.[244] A passage in the Chronicle tends to show that the common people witnessed theatrical performances under the open sky. When caught by a downpour, they would disperse pell-mell in all directions. A tile from Harwan represents a female musician

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240. Ibid., viii-119.
241. *Raj.*, 170,182: *Nilamatpurana*, 792: Kings of Kashmir. p. 123-24.
242. *Raj.*, iv-710; vii-1551
243. *India.* ii-p., 180.
244. *Raj.*, vii-59.

playing on a drum and another depicts a *danseuse* in a dancing posture. We have mention of music and dancing in the *Nilamatpurana* too. The kings were great lovers of dancing and music. King Harsa, for instance, was not only a lover of music and dancing, but an adept at these arts too. He composed songs and set them to music. He personally taught dancing girls and actors and gave music lessons to pupils. Bharata's *Natyasastra* was commented upon by Kashmirian authors and there is evidence to show that dancing as an art was assiduously cultivated by the women of rich families. There were luxurious theatrical halls fitted with leather-cushioned seats and the palace and the temple had a *natyamandhapa*, a dancing and theatrical hall, as essential part of their architecture.[245]

And for the poorer classes there were folk-songs, folk-dramas and music. Modern *Chhakri*, the popular music played to the accompaniment of brass and earthen vessels, seems to have an ancient origin.[246] At marriage feasts, sacrifices and other festivities the folk musicians were in great demand.[247]

Pilgrimages to holy places in India undertaken by religious minded people were a regular feature of life in ancient days. We have a record in the *Rajatarangini* where it is mentioned that Kashmiris were freed of pilgrims tax at Gaya by the munificence of Ermantaka, a resident of Parihaspura, as also by Kandarpa the commander-in-chief of king Harsa.[248] Similarly pilgrims and students from other parts of India visited Kashmir and we have mention of several kings and queens building hostels for their residence.

The eonveyance of early Kashmir was mainly the horse. Kashmir had a fine breed of horses as there are numerous references to swift steeds, to prancing horses and to mounted troops *(asvavara)*.

It has already been mentioned that because of the alpine nature of the kingdom, and the consequent difficulty in making and maintaining roads, there were no wheeled carriages in Kashmir till as late as the last quarter of the 19th century. Carriage of goods and passengers in the Valley was mainly done by boats, of which there are several references in the *Rajatarangini*.[249]

And for the carriage of the rich and nobility there was the famous

245. *Raj.*, vii-707,717,858.
246. *Raj.*, viii-891.
247. Ibid., vii-515.
248. Ibid., vi-254-55: vii-1008.
249. *Raj.*, v-84. vii-347,714,1628.

litter. Alberuni remarks that the "noble among them (Kashmiris) ride in palanquins called *Katt* carried on the shoulders of men."[250] Kalhana depicts the litter-carriers as belonging to an inferior class of labourers.

To cater to the needs of the infirm, aged and the sick there were numerous charitable institutions like *mathas*, hospices and hospitals. There is a record of a hospital having been built by king Ranaditya.[251] A hospice for the convenience of travellers was founded by Vakpusta,[252] and another by king Baladitya on the Pir Panjal pass.[253] Queen Isanadevi the wife of Lalitaditya, constructed several wells, "the water of which was pure as nectar", for the poor and thirsty[254]

The standard of life of the people of ancient Kashmir seems to have been fairly high and in no way inferior to people living in the rest of India. For, it is only in congenial social and economic environments that the arts of peace can flourish. And the fact that ancient Kashmir made outstanding contributions to literature, philosophy, art and achitecture of India proves that the people had more spacious times to live in.

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250. Ibid., iv-407: v-33. 219: vii-478: viii-2298. 2636. 2674. 3145.
251. Ibid., iii-461.
252. Ibid., ii-58.
253. Stein. trans. of *Rajatarangini*, p. 395.
254. *Raj.*, iv-212.

7

ART AND CULTURE

"The beautiful greece," observes Younghusband, "with its purple hills and varied contour, its dancing seas and clear blue sky, produced the graceful Greeks. But Kashmir is more beautiful than Greece. It has the same blue sky and brilliant sunshine, but its purple hills are on a far grander scale, and if it has no sea, it has lake and river, and the still more impressive snowy mountains. It has, too, greater variety of natural scenery, of field and forest, of rugged mountain and open valley. And to me who have seen both countries, Kashmir seems much the more likely to impress a race by its natural beauty. Has it ever made any such impression? Are there no remains of buildings, roads, aqueducts, canals, statues, or any such mark by which a people leaves its impress on a country? And is there any literature or history?"[1]

Certainly there are the ruins of temples and buildings all over the Valley, remarkable for their Egyptian solidity, simplicity and durability, as well as for what Cunningham describes their graceful elegance, the massive boldness of their parts, and the happy propriety of their outlines. And Kashmir has the unique distinction of possessing an unbroken historical record from ancient times to the present day. In the field of literature and philosophy it stands second to none in the rest of India, for, in the words of the Chronicler, 'learning, lofty houses, saffron, grapes and icy water—things which are difficult to get in heaven, are common here.'

Home of Sanskrit Learning

In ancient times Kashmir was the 'high school' of Sanskrit learning and scholars from all parts of India came to the Valley to study at the feet of great teachers and savants. "For upward of two

1. *Kashmir, pp.* 115-16.

thousand years," declares Grierson, "Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small Valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. Kashmiris are proud and justly proud of the literary glories of their land. For centuries it (Kashmir) was the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Saivism, has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitasta. Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in the Valley, and from it has issued in the Sanskrit language a world-famous collection of folk-lore."[2]

How and when Kashmir became a centre of Sanskrit language and learning is an interesting study in itself. According to one theory the eastern part of Iran was the region where the Aryans lived as long as they formed one people. The Indo-Aryans after their arrival in Afghanistan migrated in due course to the Punjab and the Gangetic Plains. We have already noted the immigration of Indo-Aryans from the Punjab into the Valley, and with the suppression of the earlier immigrants from the north by the more civilized Indo-Aryans, Sanskrit became the language of religion and polite literature, until in the words of Bilhana "even women in Kashmir spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit quite fluently."

In the age of Asoka when Buddhism was carried to the Valley, the texts and literature of the new religion were written in Sanskrit, in contrast to those written in Pali in the rest of India. With the development of Mahayana the entire Buddhistic literature was composed in the Sanskrit language and it was perhaps because of this that Sanskrit was diffused in Central Asia by the numerous Buddhist missionaries from Kashmir. We have already noted the great part played in this movement by Kumarajiva and his band of Kashmiri Buddhist scholars and as a result of this activity Kucha became a centre of Sanskrit learning in Central Asia. In recent years a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts written on birch-bark have been discovered in the vast region of the Central Asian uplands and the only lot of Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts ever discovered in India has come from Gilgit in Kashmir.

Not only did students from the rest of India come to the Valley for higher studies, but we find pilgrims and scholars from Central Asia and China coming to Kashmir to study Sanskrit texts. Heun Tsiang spent two years in the Valley studying Buddhist texts in

2. *Linguistic survey of India,* Vol-II, part 2.

Sanskrit and so did the earlier scholars Che-mong and Fa-yong. Ou-kong spent four years in Kashmir and studied Sanskrit and Vinaya from three teachers.

In the age of Asoka, Sanskrit was written both in the Kharosthi and the Brahmi script. In Kashmir the scholars developed a script of their own — the Sarada — which though differing from the Devanagari in details, follows it in its essentials. In the ninth century AD the Tibetans who had no script for their language adopted the Sarada script of Kashmir.

Birch-bark was widely used for both literary writings and government correspondence and commercial transactions. It was also used for packing parcels and lining roofs to make them watertight. The ink used for writing on birch-bark was prepared by a special process so that it might not get faded or washed off by water. Birch-bark likewise is not affected by damp. This way many old manuscripts by being hidden in wells and pits escaped destruction at the hands of many an ignorant and unscrupulous ruler.

Kashmir occupied the pride of place in having a large number of libraries of Sanskrit manuscripts. Temples and *viharas* were the repositories of these literary treasures, but there were huge private libraries too, maintained by families having literary traditions. Even as late as 1875 when George Buhler went to Kashmir in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, and when Sanskrit learning there was not as flourishing as in ancient times, he found more than 22 Sanskrit speaking pandits as well as traders and officials who were 'possessors of most considerable collections of manuscripts."[3]

Grammar and Prosody

The development of Sanskrit language was an object of special study with the pandits of Kashmir. They made important contribution to the study of Vedic literature, grammar and philology. *Ubbatbhasa* is a learned exposition of the text of *Sukla-yajurveda*. Panini's monumental work on Sanskrit grammar, the *Astadhyayi*, was commented upon by Patanjali in the *Mahabhasya*, a work of unrivalled importance on grammar. He is said to have lived in the second century BC and the Kashmiri tradition, upheld by several scholars, claims him as having been born in the village of Godra in the south of the Valley.[4]

The study of *Mahabhasya*, however, seems to have received a

3. Buhler, *Report*.
4. Pandit Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p 96.

set-back towards the beginning of the the first century AD Bhartrhari mentions Baiji, Sauva and Haryaksha, who by their uncritical methods did much to push the *Mahabhasya* to the background.[5] However, in about the fourth century AD during the reign of Abhimanyu, Chandracharya and his colleagues brought back into general use the study of Mahabhasya which in the absence of competent teachers or correct text had become difficult and disused. Chandracharya founded through his work *Chandra-vyakarna* a school of Sanskrit grammar called the Chandra, second in importance to that of Panini.[6]

Kalhana refers to a similar restoration of the study of Patanjali's great grammatical work under Jayapida. His teacher in grammar, Kshiraswamin, son of Isvarswamin, wrote his well-known commentary on the *Dhatupatha* or the study of verbs, and other smaller grammatical treatises, still extant.[7] That Kshiraswamin was a Kashmiri is proved by a passage in the *Vamsastuty* appended by Rajanaka Ananda to his commentary on Naisadcharita (composed 1654), where he is claimed to be one of the great scholars produced by the Rajanaka family of Kashmir, along with Kayatta, Uvatta, and Mamatta.[8] Kayatta, son of Jayatta and a brother of Mamatta, has also given us *Mahabhasyapradipa*, a guide to the study of *Mahabhasya*.

Another commentary on Panini's work, *Kasikavritti*, written jointly by Jayaditta and Vamana, two Kashmiri grammarians, has been mentioned by I-tsiang in the seventh century AD. Two other Kashmiri grammarians, Bhatta Jagadhara the author of *Balabodini* and Chiku Bhatta of *Baghuvritti*, propagated the teachings of the Katantra school, which though founded outside Kashmir had many adherents in the Valley.

In metrics and prosody Kashmiri authors have made valuable contribution to Sanskrit language and literature. Pingalacharya, the author of the well-known work on metrics, *Pingala*, was a Kashmiri and so was Kedara Bhatta who wrote *Vrittaratnakara*, used widely after *Pingala*. Another work on metrics, *Suvritta-tilaka* was the work of the well-known Kashmiri author, Kshemendra. Mamatta, his later contemporary, wrote a book entitled *Sabdavyaparacharcha*.[9] In the field of lexicography also Kashmir's contribution is considerable.

5. *Vakyapadiya*, ii-489-90
6. *Raj.*, iv-488.
7. *Raj.*, iv-489.
8. *See* Buhler's Poonam Mss Coll. 1875-76, No. 143, fol. 673.
9. The manuscript is in the Dacca University Library.

The *Anekarthakosa* of Mankha is of special importance and is an improvement on preceding authors like Amarasimha. The latter's works were commented upon by Kshiraswamin in his treatise entitled *Narmalinganusasanam.*

Poetics

Both according to their own account and according to the admissions of learned in India, the Kashmirians were formely as distinguished in the '*Alankara-Sastra*', or poetics, as in poetry, and produced a long series of writers on this subject. There is nothing surprising about it, for in a beautiful valley like Kashmir, the accent must necessarily have been on the pursuit of beauty in all its aspects. The Kashmirian writers did not only develop some of the earlier schools of poetics that were born in other parts of India such as *Rasa, Alankara, Riti, Vakroti* and *Auchitya* but made original contribution to the science of poetics with their theory of *Dhvani.*

The *Rasa* school, based on the famous aphorisms of Bharata *(Natyasastrao,* found its exponent in Lolluta, a contemporary of king Jayapida (ninth century AD). Sankuka, his contemporary, improved upon Lolluta's theory that *Rasa* belonged to the performer only, by explaining that it was related to the spectators as well. A further explanation of *Rasa* was given by Bhatta Nayaka by calling it in its final state as communion with the Highest Spirit. Abhinavagupta's definition of *Rasa* is that it is His manifestation.

Bhatt Udbhatta, the court pandit of king Jayapida wrote profusely on the *Alankara* school. His *Kavyalankaravrtti,* now lost, and *Alankarasangraha* deal in detail with the definitions and explanations of 41 *Alankaras*. Rudratta (ninth century AD) reviewed the whole field of poetics in the 16 chapters of his extensive work, *Kavyalankara.*

The *Riti* school had its exponent in Vamana, a minister of Jayapida. In his work *Kavyalankara-Sutra* he asserts that *Riti* is the soul of poetry. He is the first to distinguish between *Guna* and *Alankara* and thus his work is an improvement on Dandin.

As against this assertion we have the claim of *Vakrokti,* a striking mode of speech, to being the soul of poetry, put forth by its originator, Rajanaka Kuntala. In his work *Vakrokti-jivita,* he lays emphasis on this aspect of poetics. But the theory has been severely criticised by another great writer on this subject, Rajanaka Mahima Bhatta, in his *Vyakti-viveka.*

Kshemendra, the polymath of Kashmir, has written on another

theory of poetics, that of *Auchitya*, which he illustrates in his work called *Auchatyavichara* and *Kavikanthabaran.*

But it is for their theory of *Dhvani*, a unique contribution to the science of poetics, that the Kashmirian authors deserve credit. The first propounder of this school was Anandavardhana, who in his *Dhvanyaloka* asserts, that it is *Dhvani* that is the soul of poetry. According to Kane, "the *Dhvanyaloka* is an epoch-making work in the history of *Alankara* literature. It occupies the same position in poetics as Panini's *Astadhyayi* in grammar and Sankaracharya's commentary on *Vedanta*."

Anandavardhana and Theory of 'Dhvani'

Anandavardhana's literary activity falls within the years 860-890 AD, which almost coincides with the reign of king Avantivarman. It may well be described as the most prosperous age in the political and cultural history of ancient Kashmir. It was in this atmosphere of creative endeavour when sculpture, music, architecture and poetry reached new heights, that Anandavardhana found the inspiration for his epoch-making theoretical work. His own equipment was also amazing; in him was combined wealth of scholarship and erudition, with natural grasp and intuitive insight. His works reveal the vast range of his studies; in them we find quotations from all the important writers of antiquity. His interests were varied — poetry, drama, philosophy, theology, ancient lore, Buddhist classics; he was equally familiar with them all. Besides his major work on aesthetics, and his poetical compositions, he was also the author of a learned commentary on Buddhist Logic, a Tibetan translation of which is available though the original is lost. He was regarded as an eminent poet, and Kalhana mentions him alongside Sivaswamin and Ratnakara, as a poet rather than a philosopher.

Anandavardhana's masterpiece, *Dhvanyaloka* or the "Light of Suggestion", marks the beginning of a new age in aesthetics. It consists of two main portions — the 'Karikas' in which the fundamental principles are stated in a condensed form, and the `Vrittis' or the detailed prose comments on the former. Discarding the *Alankara* and *Guna* theories of Bhamaha and Dandin respectively, which lay stress on ornamental qualities and figures of speech in poetry, he asserts that all the aspects of art can only be harmonised if we grasp with absolute clarity the difference between the language of art and the language of ordinary usage. The fact that even a plain statement of an ordinary event, if made by a poet or an artist, appeals to us, and

moves us, shows that artistic representation works upon us *indirectly,* and in a more subtle fashion than ordinary communication. This suggestiveness, or the capacity to produce subtle impressions, Anandavardhana calls ``*'Vyanja Kavya'* and the type of poetic or artistic composition in which this quality is successfully utilised is called *'Dhvani'*. Quoting his own words, "those types of artistic creations are designated *'Dhvani'* by the experts, in which the obvious words and meanings are subordinated, and other delightful ideas are suggested, such as we see in the masterpieces of great poetry."

It is interesting to see that while Anandavardhana was later universally revered as a great 'Acharya', he had to face the opposition of some of the lesser poets at Avantivarman's court. Anandavardhana's genius aroused the jealousy of one Jayanta, who derided him as a "self-conceited pedant." But who takes Jayanta's derisive remarks seriously today?

During the hundred years between the exposition of his *Dhvani* theory by Anandavardhana and its final establishment by Abhinavagupta, writers on aesthetics continued to devote their attention to the theory. In spite of the geographical isolation of Kashmir, the theory was quickly noted by scholarly circles all over India, and we hardly come across any important writer on aesthetics who could ignore it.

The first among the Kashmiri successors of Anandavardhana in aesthetics proper, was Mukula Bhatta, son of Bhatta Kalatta mentioned in the *Rajatarangini.*[10] He wrote a book called *Abhidhavrittimatrika.* Apart from other problems, it is interesting to see that it contains a discussion on the use of words in their various primary and secondary senses, a branch of speculation that has today come in for a good deal of emphasis at the hands of European writers on "semantics".

Anandavardhana's theory came in for direct criticism by Mukula Bhatta's pupil Pratiharenduraja who harked back to the views of Udbhatta, the leader of the *Alankara* school. Another critic was Bhatta Nayaka, an elder contemporary of Abhinavagupta and the author of *Hridaydarpana.* This book which is now known to us only through quotations of others, was considered a valuable contribution to aesthetics.

Bhatta Nayaka was a revivalist and upheld Bharata's views that the 'Soul of poetry' was the experience of the reader to be one with the subject through poetic words and expressions rather than by suggestion of *'Dhvani'*. Bhatta Nayaka in spite of his revivalism could

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10. *Raj,* v-66.

be very modern on occasions. He laid great stress on the distinction between Poetry on the one hand and scripture or mythology on the other. The latter, he pointed out, might give us moral injunctions or valuable information, but only Poetry can give us aesthetic pleasure.

Abhinavagupta's teacher, Bhatta Tauta also wrote on aesthetics. His literary activity falls between the years 950-980 AD but his best known work *Kavyakautuka* on which his famous disciple wrote a commentary is unfortunately lost. He attempted to show that when a great dramatic poem is staged or read, all the three 'parties' namely the author, the actor and the reader or spectator pass through essentially the same emotional experience. He was the first to emphasise the importance of the peaceful emotion — *'Shanta Rasa'* — which occupies such an important place in later aesthetic writings.

Abhinava Gupta

It was, however, Abhinavagupta, the famous poet, critic, philosopher and saint of Kashmir who wrote profusely on aesthetics. Like a drama moving to its climax aesthetic thought in Kashmir moved to its highest pitch in the writings of Abhinavagupta, undoubtedly the greatest figure in the history of Indian aesthetics. He was one of those very few individuals who have earned as much reverence for the sublimity of the character as for the magnitude of their intellectual achievements. Even now his name is uttered by unlettered villagers in Kashmir with the deepest respect. It is believed that near the village of Magam on the Gulmarg road, he 'entered samadhi' with 1,200 of his disciples.

In a family full of traditions of scholarship, Abhinavagupta was born some time between 950 and 960 AD. His ancestor Atrigupta, a reputed scholar of Kanauj, came to Kashmir at the invitation of Lalitaditya and settled permanently in the Valley. Abhinavagupta's grandfather, Varahagupta, and his father, Narsinghagupta, were both well known for their vast learning. From his mother Vimalakala he inherited a deep interest in spiritual practices.

In his childhood, however, Abhinavagupta faced a calamity in the death of his mother and then renunciation of this world by his father. But being gifted with a strong will, he pursued his studies with uncommon zeal. Fortunately he came across teachers of versatile genius. Some of them were versed in Buddhist lore and scripture, others were Jains while still others were Saivas. He studied metaphysics, poetry, aesthetics and took lessons in practical exercises of yoga. With a rare passion for truth, Abhinavagupta through years of

superhuman toil, mastered all branches of knowledge.

Then began his own creative activity. He studied all the tantric texts from the point of view of Kashmir Saivism and the result of his labour was his famous work, *Tantraloka*. In his second phase he made a study of all the schools of poetics and produced his famous work on aesthetics, *Abhinavabharati* and *Locana*, a commentary on Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka*. In the third and final phase he was drawn towards metaphysical problems and made his own important formulations which raised Kashmir Saiva philosophy to its highest level and secured for it a permanent place in the history of human thought.

Abhinavagupta remained a celibate all his life, and in his later years virtually became an ascetic. "This, however," observes Dr. V.S. Naravane, "should not give the impression that he was far removed from the domain of practical human experience. He was a close observer of life and his extraordinary memory enabled him to carry in his mind all the impressions he had gathered from books, conversations with teachers and friends, and his own experience." His works abound with references to joys and sorrows of human life. He shows interest in flora and fauna of the Valley and sings with joy of the beauty of the Vitasta meandering slowly through paddy fields and orchards and trees and villages of Kashmir. He does not hesitate to mention the kinds of wine brewed in Kashmir nor to talk of the physical beauty and complexion of women. In him we find the sage, scholar and man.

In the field of aesthetics Abhinavagupta attempted a double synthesis. He considered one by one the points touched by the *'Rasa'* and *'Dhvani'* schools and making them self-consistent and complete sought to write them in the one stream of thought. His *Abhinavabharati*, a voluminous work of over a thousand pages, deals primarily with the *'Rasa'* theory and the problems raised by it, whereas his *Locana* is concerned with the points raised by Anandavardhana.

Apart from this, his own contribution is the enunciation of *Shanta Rasa*, the mood of serenity and peace, as the ultimate end of art. In his own words, "all emotions, when their exciting conditions are present, emerge from *Shanta*, and when these conditions are withdrawn they again merge into *Shanta.*"

Abhinavagupta's disciple, Mamattacharya also made considerable contribution to poetics. He took his early education at Banaras. His famous work *Kavyaprakasa* possesses such merit that it has been com-

mented upon by more than 70 ancient and modern scholars. It covers the whole ground of rhetoric, deals with the merits and demerits of poetry, the functions of different words and their sources and the figures of speech. He champions the theory of *Dhvani* and attacks with vehemence the upholders of other schools of poetics. His independence of judgment and originality of thought in this field are well known.

The tenth chapter of *Kavyaprakasa* has been continued by his pupil Allata. Manikyachandra has written the first and most reliable commentary on *Kavyaprakasa.* Rajanaka Ruyyaka, who lived in the 12th century AD wrote *Alankarasarvasva* and ably summarised the views of the early writers. He has also written *Alankara-anusarini, Sahradaya-lila, Sanketa-ṭika,* a commentary on *Kavyaprakasa, Vyaktiviveka-vichara,* a commentary on *Vyaktiviveka* of Mahima Bhatta, and *Nataka-mimansa.*

This does not, however, exhaust the list of Kashmirian writers on poetics which would run to hundreds. It is obvious that the whole literature of Sanskrit poetics has been permeated by their contributions or original works in this field.

Poetry and Drama

Kashmir has produced a galaxy of poets and dramatists in Sanskrit. Influenced by the natural beauty of their homeland, its lofty mountains, lakes, waterfalls and charming flowers of multitudinous colours, they wrote dramas, epics, lyrical as well as dialectic poems, mythological poems, essays, fiction and anthologies.

It is indeed a pity that Sanskrit compositions of Kashmirian poets and authors prior to the sixth century AD have not so far been discovered, though from the highly developed style and thought of the compositions of the eighth century and onwards it can safely be deduced that these just have been the product of a long period of creative culture. In fact the *Rajatarangini* mentions a number of poets and dramatists who flourished long before the beginning of the Christian era. One, named Chandaka is said to have been a great poet, though no specific work is attributed to him. He may be the same Chandaka to whom some verses are ascribed in Ballabhadeva's *Subhasitavali.* Kalhana records that he flourished in the reign of Tunjina and his plays attracted large audiences.

Another great poet mentioned by Kalhana is Bhartrmentha who was honoured by Matrigupta, himself a poet, for writing the famous

poem *Hayagrivavadha* by "placing below the volume a golden dish, lest its flavour might escape."[11] This famous poem is unfortunately lost but Bhartrmentha is mentioned by Kshemendra in the *Suvrttatilaka* and by Mankha in *Srikanthacharita* (ii-53). The latter places him by the side of Subandhu, Bharavi and Bana. Verses are quoted under his name in Srivara's *Subhasitavali* and latter anthologies. Dr. Bhaudaji found verses from *Hayagrivavadha* quoted in Raghava Bhatta's commentary on *Sakuntala.*

Matrigupta, the patron of Bhartrmentha, who ruled Kashmir for some time as the nominee of Vikramaditya of Ujjain, has been supposed by some scholars to have been no less a person than Kalidasa himself. That Matrigupta was a poet and a historical character is proved by his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* which is referred to in Sundarasimha's *Natyapradipa.* Kshemendra quotes Matrigupta in one of his works and some of his verses have found a place in Vallabhadeva's anthology.

But the arguments in favour of the identification of Matrigupta with Kalidasa are not convincing. These are chiefly based on the synonymity of the two names, Kalidasa and Matrigupta *(Kali: matr, dasa: gupta),* on the absence of any mention of Kalidasa in the *Rajatarangini* and on the attribution of Kalidasa of the Prakrit poem *Setubandha* composed at the request of a king Pravarasena. The latter was assumed to have been Pravarasena II, Matrigupta's successor. Professor Max Muller has reproduced these arguments in his *India,* (pp. 312-347), but has in the same place indicated the grave objections which preclude the acceptance of this identification.

If, however, Matrigupta cannot be indetified with Kalidasa, there is a strong presumption in his being a Kashmiri by birth. He is said to have flourished during the latter half of the fifth or the first half of the sixth century AD. His reference to Huns in Kashmir in the *Raghuvamsa* and other references to the climate and products of the Valley, form the basis of Pandit Lachhmi Dhar Sastri's theory of Kashmir being the birth place of the famous poet-dramatist of Sanskrit literature. His exhaustive research on the subject may be summarised thus:[12]

1. Kalidasa's affectionate description of the rice fields and the songs associated with the rice fields.

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11. *Raj.*, iii-260-62.
12. Lachhmi Dhar, *The Birth-Place of Kalidasa,* Delhi University Publication No.1 (1926).

2. His description of a living saffron plant which is grown in Kashmir and which no non-Kashmirian writer is known to have described.
3. His description of the Devadaru forests, lakes, tarns, glades, caves with lions, musk-deer on the higher altitudes.
4. His reference to some sites of minor importance in Kashmir which were till recently considered as imaginary, but which modern research has identified with their ancient names. The sites are only of local importance and could not be known to one who was not in close touch with Kashmir.
5. Kalidasa's description of Kashmir in the *Sakuntala* in which he refers to the lacustrine origin of Kashmir, which is commonly known to Kashmiris.
6. His reference to certain Kashmiri legends such as that of *Nikumbha* which are known only to Kashmiri writers.
7. Kalidasa's personal religion which was the Kashmir Saivism based on the doctrine of the Pratyabhijna philosophy unknown outside Kashmir then. Though this philosophy was developed in its refined form towards the end of the eighth century AD, there is no doubt that this tendency of thought existed long before its systematisation by Somananda.

Damodaragupta, a famous poet and moralist, was the chief councillor of king Jayapida. Most of his poetical compositions are lost, but he is quoted in several anthologies. His well-known book *Kuttanimata Kavya* which is fortunately still extant is a practical treatise on erotics and being full of interesting stories throws a flood of light on contemporary life.

King Jayapida was the patron of Bhatta Udbhatta, his court poet known chiefly for his writings on aesthetics. He also wrote the poem *Kumarasambhava*. Though not surviving now, some verses of it are found in his *Alankarasangraha*. Kalhana mentions names of Manoratha, Samkhadatta, Chtaka and Samdhimat who also flourished at his court. Verses of Manoratha are quoted in Vallabhadeva's *Subhasitavali*. The works of the other three poets are not traceable now.

Another famous poet of the eighth century AD was Sankuka who composed a historical poem called *Bhuvanabhyudaya* depicting the fierce battle for ascendency between the brothers Mamma and Utpala, the maternal uncles of Chipattajayapida, in which "the flow of the Vitasta was held up by the floating corpses of the warriors falling

in the battlefield." The work is not available now, but quotations from it are included in *Subhasitavali* of Vallabhadeva, and also in *Srangadharapadhati* and *Suktimuktavali.* Sankuka's name has also been referred to in the fourth chapter of the *Kavyaprakasa* where his opinion on a point of poetics is considered authoritative.

Some of the Karkota kings were poets themselves. Apart from a mention of this fact in the *Rajatarangini*, we find fragments of poems written by Muktapida and Jayapida preserved in *Subhasitavali.*

Avantivarman's reign was the glorious period of Kashmirian art and architecture. At his court flourished a number of famous poets. Besides the well-known Anandavardhana whose works have already been noted as the founder of the *'Dhvani'* school of aesthetics, there were Sivaswamin, Ratnakara and Muktakana. Sivaswamin seems to have been a Buddhist and wrote a poem named *Kapphinabhyudaya,* of which the theme is the Buddhist legend in which the Buddha intervenes in a feud between Daksinapatha and Prasenjit of Sravasti. At the end of the war, which resulted in his victory, Kapphina accepted Buddhism and renounced his worldly attachments. Some of the verses of Sivaswamin are quoted in Kshemendra's *Kavyakanthabharana* and Vallabhadeva's *Subhasitavali,* which illustrate *Sivaswamin's* spirited description of the assembly of chieftains, who wring their hands in fury at aggressive designs of the foe, protest against the policy of procrastination and apathy and plead for an immediate drastic action.

Ratnakara or with his full name Rajanaka Ratnakara Vagisvara, is the author of the great Kavya *Haravijaya.* Composed under king Chippatajayapida the poem runs into 50 cantos and narrates the story of the slaying of demon Andhaka by Siva. The excellence of this work which employs a large variety of metres, matching the sound to the sense, has been praised by several ancient scholars outside Kashmir like the poet Rajasekhara. Besides the *Haravijaya,* Ratnakara is credited with the composition of two smaller poems, *Vakrokti-Panchasika* and *Dhvanigathapanchasika.*

None of the compositions of Muktakana are now traceable. He is known otherwise only from quotations in two treatises of Kshemendra. Another poet whose mention is made by Kalhana was Bhallata the author of the extant *Bhallatasataka,* a poem of 108 stanzas dealing with morality and conduct. He lived during the reign of king Samkaravarman. Verses from this work have been quoted by Abhinavagupta, Kshemendra and Mamatta.

It is not unlikely that king Samkaravarman who was also known by the name of Yasovarman, composed some poems himself. A lost drama entitled *Ramabhyudaya* written by one Yasovarman, which is cited by Anandavardhana in his *Dhvanyaloka*, probably belongs to him. Some verses written by a poet called Yosavarman and preserved in *Kavindravachana Samuchchaya* and *Subhasitavali*, may also be ascribed to him.

Abhinanda, son of Jayanta Bhatta, who lived in the first half of the tenth century AD, composed *Kadambari-Kathasara*, a metrical summary of Bana's famous prose romance. Abhinanda in his introduction to the poem traces his descent to one Sakti who had emigrated from Gauda (Bengal) and settled in the south of Kashmir Valley.

The polymath Kshemendra was a poet, moralist, historian, critic, and fable writer, all combined in one. A pupil of Abhinavagupta, he was born in a well-to-do family, some time towards the end of the tenth century AD. His father's name was Prakasendra and his grandfather's Sindhu. He was widely read and his studies comprised all the sciences and arts then known in Kashmir. He had a thorough knowledge of mathematics, astrology, medicine, surgery, politics, erotics, Saivism and Buddhist philosophy. Though, as he says, he did not enjoy the company of dry logicians and grammarians, he yet studied all the lexicons of his day. He seems to have been fond of songs, novels and interesting conceits of poetry.

Kshemendra's productions are as varied as his studies. His *Bharatamanjari, Ramayanamanjari, Brhatkathamanjari, Padyakadambari* and *Avadanakalapalata*, are abstracts from the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, Gunadhya's *Brihatkatha*, Bana's *Kadambari* and the Buddhist *Avadanas*. Several of his works have been lost, among which is the *Nrapavali*, a history of Kashmir referred by Kalhana in his Chronicle. His extant works include *Nitiklpataru, Charucharya, Nitilata, Vinayavali, Darpadalana, Sevyasevakopadesa, Munimatmimansa, Chaturvarga-Samgraha, Auchitya-vicharachara, Kavikanthabharana*, and *Dasavataracharita*.

Kshemendra's contribution to Sanskrit literature is unique in one respect. He introduces social satire, mixed with humour and sarcasm. His *Samayamatrika* is a poem of eight chapters narrating the story of the wanderings of a courtesan in the Valley. It is an interesting specimen of satire rarely found in Sanskrit literature, on strolling musicians, women beggars, shopgirls, saints, thieves and other classes of people. His *Kalavilasa* depicts various occupations and follies of the people of the time, such as physicians, traders,

astrologers, goldsmiths, harlots and saints. His *Darpadalana* condemns pride which is said to spring from birth in a good and rich family, wealth, learning, beauty, valour, charity and asceticism. Kshemendra's *Desopadesa* exposes all kinds of sham in society through his caricatures of the life of various depraved sections of the community, such as cheats, misers, prostitutes, bawds, voluptuaries, students from Gauda (Bengal), old men married to young girls, degraded Saiva Gurus, etc. The *Narmamala* is a sharp satire on the oppression practised by the Kayasthas.

Kshemendra's *Brhatkathamanjari* is a faithful summary of the now lost *Brhatkatha* of Gunadhya in 7,500 stanzas. It is not merely a condensed version of the original work, but the author has interpolated his own descriptions and writings at several places.

An equally famous poet was Bilhana who left Kashmir in the reign of Kalasa (1063-89 AD) and rose to great prominence at the court of the Chalukya king Parmadi Vikramaditya Tribhuvanamalla, who appointed him as the "Chief Pandit (Vidyapati) and when travelling on elephants through the hill-country of Karnata, his parasol was borne aloft before the king."[13] He has immortalised his patron in his *Vikramankadevacharita* which is perhaps one of the first Sanskrit poems having a historical approach.

From the last canto of his famous 'Kavya' we learn that his birthplace was Khonamusa (modern Khonmuh), a village 10 kilometres to the south-east of Srinagar. His father Jyesthakalasa and his mother Nagadevi took particular care of his education and he acquired proficiency in grammar and poetics. At the time of the nominal rule of Kalasa, he set out for the plains of India to seek fame and fortune. He visited Mathura, Kanyakubja, Prayaga and Banaras. He stayed for some time at the court of Krishna of Dahala and later attracted by the fame of the courts of Dhara and Anhilwad, he left for the latter place where he seems to have stayed for a brief period. From there he went to the sacred shrine of Rameswara and on his way back, reached the court of Kalyan, where his talents were recognised by the king who installed him to the high position of Vidyapati.

The *Vikramankadevacharita,* glorifying king Vikramaditya Tribhuvanamalla of Kalyan (1076-1127 AD), is a poem of eighteen cantos opening with an eulogistic account of the Chalukya dynasty and depicting with usual amplifications 'the conquests of Vikrama-

13. *Raj.*, vii-935-37.

ditya before his accession to the throne, his dethronement of his elder brother Someswara II, his defeat and capture of his younger brother and his numerous wars with the faithless Colas.' Though it has a historical theme, it is in all essentials only a 'kavya' and not a history.

His *Karnasundary,* though written as a romantic tale, actually delineates in a complimentary fashion the marriage of the Chalukya Karnadeva of Anhilwad.

Another poem, generally ascribed to Bilhana, is *Chaurasurata Panchasika,* of 50 amatory verses, sung in the first person, on the topic of secret love. A masterpiece of emotional richness, it shows the author at his best as a writer of lyrical melody.

Bilhana's treatment of a historical theme in the form of a 'Kavya' was imitated by another Kashmiri poet, Sambu, who lived in the court of king Harsa. His *Rajendra-Karnapura* is a high-flown panegeric eulogising his patron and his *Ayokti-muktalata* is a collection of verses on various topics.

Another poet of the same category was Jalhana who left the Valley at the accession of Uccala and took service at the court of king Somapala of Rajauri, on whose life and history he wrote a 'kavya' entitled *Somapalavilasa.* His *Mugdhopadesa* is a poem ethical in character.

Mankha the renowned poet who served under Jayasimha is known by his poem *Srikanthacharita,* written between the years 1135 and 1145 AD. The subject of the poem is the Puranic legend of Siva's overthrow of Tripura. But as usual several cantos are devoted to poetic descriptions of the seasons, the sunset, sunrise, court scenes, amusements, etc. We also learn from the third canto of the poem something of the family and personal life of the poet. He was the son of Visvavrata and had three brothers, all occupying responsible posts with the government of the day. When he completed the poem, he put it before an assembly of 30 contemporary scholars, poets and officials where it was publicly read. The list of poets and scholars given by Mankha shows that Kashmir of the 12th century continued to be a centre of Sanskrit learning. One of the scholars was Kalyana (Kalhana) the celebrated author of the *Rajatarangini.* A notable historical data revealed by Mankha's enumeration of the people in this literary gathering is the presence of two ambassadors, Suhala, sent by Govind Chandra, the Rathor of Kanauj (who according to his inscriptions reigned between 1120 and 1144 AD), and

Tejkantha sent by Aparaditya, the lord of the Konkans, whose inscriptions are dated 1185 and 1186 A.D. The mention of the latter showing that political connections existed between Aparaditya and Kashmir during the period 1135 and 1145 Ad. is of great interest, for, it proves that the reign of Aparaditya must have been of long duration, and reduces the gap in the history of the Silharas after Sri Mamvani's inscription dated 1060 AD very considerably.[14]

Mankha is the author of a Sanskrit dictionary, a mention of which has already been made.

Among the minor works which were composed during the last years of the Hindu rule, mention may be made of *Haracharita-chintamani* of Jayadratha, written probably in the 12th or 13th century. The poem in the 'kavya' style relates in 32 cantos some legends connected with Siva and his incarnations. Placed in some of the famous *tirthas* of Kashmir the legends incidently describe these sacred sites and help in the reconstruction of ancient geography of the Valley.

Sanskrit poetry continued to flourish in Kashmir even in the 13th century. Jonaraja mentions a poet Saka who flourished at the court of Samgramadeva (1235-52 AD) and composed a poem with his patron as its hero.

The deep religious tendency among Kashmiris inspired them to write devotional songs. Some of the famous poems of this category are *Vakrokti-panchasika* of Ratnakara, *Devisataka* of Anandavardhana, *Stotravali* of Utpal, *Sivamahimnah* of Pushpadanta and *Stutikusmanjali* of Jagadhar Bhatta.

Historical Literature

We have already dealt in detail (Chapter two) the importance of Kashmir in the field of historical compositions in ancient times. The *Nilamatpurana* is a story of pre-historic Kashmir. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* occupies a unique position as the only work on history in Sanskrit with a scientific approach of modern historians. Yet Kalhana was not the first in this line. He mentions the works of 11 preceding historians whose compositions he consulted in producing his famous work. Among the early historians, whose works unfortunately cannot be traced, were Helaraja, Padmamihara, Chavillakara, Suvrata and Kshemendra. Kalhana's tradition was continued by others in this line — Jonaraja, Srivara Prajyabhatta and Suka. That Kashmiri writers possessed a historical sense is proved by Bilhana's *Vikramankadevacharita*

14. Buhler, *Report*.

which though composed in the 'kavya' style was yet superior in historical approach to the works of Bana and Hemachandra.

Medicine

There are some original works on medicine too. Perhaps as a result of the presence of rich flora and fauna in the Valley, the Vaidyas of Kashmir were inspired to conduct research in the science of medicine. Professor Sylvan Levi after discovering Buddhist manuscripts in Central Aisa and China, came to the conclusion that the famous Charaka the author of *Charakasamhita* belonged to Kashmir. The recension of the text available to us today was done by Dridhabala, a scholar of Kashmir. Jejjata the author of the commentary on the *Charakasamhita*, was also a Kashmiri, and so was Udbhatta who commented upon *Susrutasamhita*.

To erotics Kashmir has made notable contribution. Vasunanda whom Kalhana mentions as a king ruling in Kashmir after Mihirakula, wrote a book on erotics. *Ratirahasya*, a scientific text-book dealing with the problems of sex, both biological and psychological, was written by a Kashmiri pandit, the famous Koka the son of Tejoka. After *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana it is a very important work on this subject. Kalyanamalla, the writer of *Ananga-ranga* and Kuchimara, the reputed writer of *Tantra* were both Kashmiris. Another writer on this subject was Damodargupta, Jayapida's minister, whose *Kuttanimata Kavya* is an excellent poetical work dealing with the ethics of concubinage.

Several works on *nyaya* have been composed by Kashmirian authors. Jayanta Bhatta who seems to have lived during the reign of Samakaravarman (883-902 AD) wrote three books, *Nyayamanjari*, *Nyayakalika* and *Agamadambara*, the latter being the first philosophical play in Sanskrit.

Fable Literature

Kashmir has a long tradition of storytelling that goes back to dim antiquity. One may speculate as to why such a tradition should have developed in the Valley to an almost incredible extent. Is it because a peaceful atmosphere and secluded existence encouraged talent in this direction? Was this talent further strengthened by the long winter months of inactivity, when men had the leisure to weave fact and fancy together?

Whatever the reason might be, many of the world's best-known

tales have originated in Kashmir. Apart from Gunadhya's legendary *Brihatkatha,* which is no longer extant, and Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara,* many other collections of stories were produced among which Kshemendra's *Brihatkathamanjuri* and a version of *Panchatantra* known as *Tantrakhyayika* are particularly significant.

Somadeva who may be described as one of the founders of fiction and whose work has reached the remotest corners of the world in one form or another, wrote his masterpiece for the edification of queen Suryamati, the wife of king Anania (1028-1063). It is based on the *Brihatkatha,* and written in flowing narrative style, makes delightful reading. Without doubt it is the largest collection of stories in the world. the number of stanzas alone not counting the prose passages, is more than 22,000; it is twice as big as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together.

The *Kathasaritasagara,* besides being a version of the lost work of Gunadhya, also carries most of the stories contained in the *Panchatantra*. This version is different from the original and Hertel has advanced a strong case in favour of Kashmir being the original home of the *Panchatantra* stories.

Kshemendra's *Brihatkathamanjari* which though written earlier, does not come up to the standard of Somadeva's work, but it is a valuable and entertaining collection of fables. The Kashmirian *Brihatkatha* from which both Kshemendra and Somadeva drew their inspiration, was most probably not the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya. It seems to have been an older Kashmirian version which had undergone considerable changes. This is evident from the divergence of the works of the two Kashmirian authors with that of the Nepal version of Buddhaswamin's *Brihatkathasamgraha*.

It is interesting to note that several anthologies on various topics as love, nature, conduct, etc, from the work of eminent Sanskrit poets and authors were compiled in ancient Kashmir. Apart from their value as giving specimens of some of the best compositions in Sanskrit literature, they supply a clue to the existence of several eminent poets whose works cannot otherwise be traced. Vallabhadeva has compiled *Subhasitavali* containing 3,527 verses in 101 sections with quotations from 360 authors. Jalhana has compiled *Suktimuktavali* quoting 380 poets. It seems that the preparation of anthologies was a cultivated art with Kashmirians.

Prolific literature on Buddhist religion, law and polity, was produced by Kashmirian authors and *'Acharyas"* a detailed survey of which has already been given in Chapter four.

Kashmir Saivism

We have already traced the part played by Kashmirian philosophers in the development of Mahayana, and the impact of Saivism on the Buddhistic philosophy of Arhatship and disciplinary control of thought and action enjoined by it for the attainment of Nirvana or liberation from the circle of birth and death. Mahayana which may rightly be called a synthesis of the concept of Siva and Sakti and of the early Buddhistic philosophy, attained singular popularity and became a powerful philosophic-cum-religious force not only in northern India, but also in Central Asia and China. By the end of the eighth century, however, Buddhism seems to have lost much of its pristine glory and was slowly being supplanted by the re-emerging Brahmanic thought and philosophy in India. For Buddhism never ousted Brahmanism from any large part of India. The two systems coexisted as popular religions all along, right from the death of Buddha, and in Kashmir as we have already noted the two religions had in fact no separate existence. Even when by the end of the ninth century AD. Buddhism had had its day in the rest of India, it still continued to have its influence in Kashmir and along with Brahminism enjoyed patronage of the kings and their courts.

Period of Religious Fermentation

But there was a time when the influence of Buddhism was deeply resented. Especially after the reign of Kaniska, when under Nagarjuna's leadership Buddhism became firmly established.[15] The Saiva philosophers thought that an organised attempt was necessary to counter the preachings of 'Sunyavad' or agnosticism of the Buddhists. The only doctrine which could have proved strong and vigorous enough to serve the purpose was the absolute idealism of the Advaita school. We, therefore, find that many of the older writings of Saiva philosophers were deliberately re-interpreted and modified in the direction of Advaita.

This was no doubt strengthened by a wave of Brahminic revivalism raised as a result of Sankaracharya's preachings in the rest of India. Though there is no direct evidence of his having visited the Valley, and its only description occurs in the *Sankaradigvijay,* it has been pointed out by many scholars that his visit might have in fact taken place. In a period when Kashmir was at the height of its material and cultural prosperity, the visit of such an outstanding and dynamic personality as Sankaracharya can well have been a certainty. No

15. *Raj.*, i-173, 177.

doubt we find echoes of his impress and influence in the writings of Kashmirian philosophers like Utpalacharya and Abhinavagupta.

So we find a great fermentation of philosophic and religious thought in the Kashmir of eighth and ninth centuries. Already besides Buddhistic philosophy based mostly on Samkhya there were several other schools of philosophy flourishing in Kashmir. Dualism had its exponents in Sadyojyoti, Brihaspati and Sankarananda. This school had become so powerful that the great Abhinavagupta to refute their tenets had to write a book entitled *Bhedavada-Vidharma.*

It was in such a miliu that the monistic philosophy of Kashmir Saivism took shape until it attained the status of a distinct school of philosophy differing so fundamentally from the other systems of Saivism that Madhavacharya in his *Sarva-darsana-sangraha* does not include it under *Saiva-darsanas* but deals with it as *Pratyabijnadarsana.*

Origin of the Trika

Kashmir Saivism, known as Trika-Sastra or simply Trika, and more rarely, also as Rahasya-Sampradaya and Tryambaka-Sampradaya, is so called either because it accepts as most important the triad, *Siddha, Namaka* and *Malini,* out of the 92 Agamas recognised by it; or because the triad consisting of Siva, Sakti and Anu, or again of Siva, Sakti and Nara, or lastly, of the goddesses Pára, Apara and Paratapara is recognised; or because it explains three modes of knowledge of Reality, namely non-dual *(abheda),* non-dual-cum-dual- *(bhedabeda),* and dual *(bheda).*

The system has two main branches, Spanda or Pratyabijna. In fact, many classics of the school include the word Spanda or Pratyabijna in their very titles. The Trika is also known as Svatantryavad, Svatantrya and Spanda expressing the same concepts. 'Abhasavad' is another name of the system. It is called Kashmir Saivism, because the writers who revealed it and enriched its literature belonged to and flourished in Kashmir. Indeed the doctrine of the Trika may be regarded as a permanent and enduring heritage which Kashmir has contributed to the rich treasure of Indian philosophy.

The Trika is essentially a spiritual philosophy, because its doctrines regarding Reality, the world, and man are derived from a wealth of spiritual experiences. Its greatest exponents were *Yogins* of high stature who had wonderful insight into abstruse points of philosophy. It has been recognised in India and other countries that various kinds of discipline, which may be generally called Yoga,

reveal the mystery of the inner being and nature of man, as also the art of using the powers of knowledge and action hidden at present in unknown regions of our being and nature. The Trika is a rational exposition of a view of Reality obtained primarily through more-than-normal experiences of yoga and divine revelation.

Although the Trika form of Saivism would seem to have made its first appearance in Kashmir at the beginning of the ninth or perhaps towards the end of the eighth century AD *Sivasasana* or *Sivagama*, that is Saivism as such, is far older than this date. Indeed we can trace its beginnings in the Vedic Revelations. The *Rajatarangini* mentions the existence of Siva shrines and temples long before the advent of Buddhism in the Valley under Asoka. According to the belief and tradition of the Kashmir Saivas, all *Sastras* which are but thoughts expressed as speech, originally existed as unuttered thought and experience of the Supreme Deity. Next, on the manifestation of universe, began the All-transcending Word (Para Vak), which put forth another form, that of *Pashyanti* or Vision of the Whole Universe. With the progress of the manifestation of the Universe came the *Madhyana* or middle one which served as a link between the *Pashyanti* and the next below stage of *Vaikhri* or 'flowing art of' speech. And what are called the *Saiva Sastras* are nothing but this Divine stream of spoken words.

Literature on Trika

The origin of the earliest Saiva works in Kashmir is lost in antiquity. It is said that there were originally 64 systems of philosophy covering every aspect of thought and life, but they all gradually disappeared and the world was plunged into spiritual darkness. Then Siva, goes the legend, moved by pity for the ignorance and sufferings of mankind, appeared on the Kailasa mountain in the form of Srikantha. He commanded the sage Durvasa to spread true knowledge among men. Durvasa created three sons by the power of his mind and to one of these, the Tryambaka, he imparted the knowledge of monistic philosophy.

The literature of the Trika falls into three broad divisions: the Agama Sastra, the Spanda Sastra, and the Pratyabijna Sastra.

The Agama Sastra, regarded as of superhuman authorship, lays down both the doctrine *(Jnana)* and the practice *(Kriya)* of the system. They are believed to have come down *(Agama)* through the ages, being handed down from teacher to pupil. Among the works belonging to this *Sastra* are a number of *Tantras*, of which the chief ones are;

Malini Vijaya, Svachchanda, Vijnana-bhairava, Uchchusma-bhairava, Ananda-bhairava, Mrgendra, Matanga, Netra, Naisvasa, Svayambhuva, and *Rudra-yamala.* These were interpreted mostly as teaching a dualistic doctrine, to stop the propagation of which the *Siva-Sutra,* expounding a purely Advaistic metaphysics, was revealed to a sage called Vasugupta (c 900 AD). On these *Sutras* there are the *Vritti,* the *Vartika* by Bhaskara, and the commentary called *Vimarsini* by Kshemaraja.

The exact date of Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir Saivism, is not known for certain. But since his disciple according to Kalhana lived at the end of the ninth century AD,[16] he may also be placed near about the same period. Most of his works are now lost. His *Spandamata* and his commentary on the *Bhagvadgita* may perhaps be traced in the works of later writers on Saivism. About the personality and lineage of Vasugupta, all that we learn from his pupils is that he lived in retirement as a holy sage in Sadarhadvana (modern Harwan), behind the Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake.

We are told in the *Siva-sutra-vimarsini,* that Vasugupta, while residing in his hermitage below the Mahadeo peak, had one night a dream in which Siva appeared and disclosed to the sage existence of certain Sutras — embodying the essence of the *Siva-Sasana* — inscribed on a rock lying at a certain spot in the valley below the Mahadeo peak. The inscribed side which was turned downwards would, if he approached the rock early the next morning and touch it, turn round and the Sutras would be revealed to him. Vasugupta as directed in the dream found the rock which on his touch turned round, revealing the Sutras to the sage who learnt them by heart and propagated them to the "world immersed in spiritual darkness."[17]

A different version of this tradition has been recorded by some writers. Kshemaraja records that the *Siva-Sutras* were not found inscribed on the rock but were revealed to Vasugupta in a dream by Siva Himself. However this may be, and, however Vasugupta may have obtained them, it is clear that the *Siva-Sutras* as taught by him laid the foundation of the Advaita Saivism of Kashmir.

The *Spanda-Sastra* lays down the main principles of the system in greater detail and in a more amplified form than the *Siva-Sutras,* without entering into philosophical reasonings in their support. Of

16. *Raj.,* v-66.
17. The rock known as Sankarpal is still lying in the valley above Harwan but there is no trace of any inscription on it.

the treatises belonging to this *Sastra* the foremost are: the *Spanda-Sutras,* generally called *Spanda Karikas;* and the *Vritti* which together with the former, is called the *Spanda-Sarvasva.*

Kshemendra (c 1015 AD) attributes the *Spanda-Sutras* to Vasugupta himself, but most probably they were composed by the latter's pupil, Kallata.

It is clear form all accounts that the chief agent by whom Vasugupta had his teachings promulgated was Kallata who spread their knowledge by writing commentaries on the *Siva-Sutras.* According to Kalhana, he 'descended to the earth for the benefit of the people' during the reign of Avantivarman (855-883 AD). He wrote a commentary called *Spanda-Sarvasva* on his teacher' *Spandamrita.* His two other books, *Tatvartha-Chintamani* and *Madhuvahini,* both of them now lost, were commentaries on the *Siva-Sutras*

There are several commentaries on the *Spanda-Sutras.* Ramakantha, a pupil of the great Utpala, (900-950 AD) has written the *Vritti.* Utpala Vaisnava has commented upon the *Spanda-Sutras* in his *Pradipika* and Kshemaraja has written the *Spanda Samdoha*, a commentary on the first *Sutra,* but giving the purport of the whole work.

Pratyabijna-Sastra

From the above it would appear that Vasugupta did no more than simply transmit the *Sutras* with their meanings to Kallata who spread their knowledge by writing explanatory treatises on them. In the *Spanda-Sarvasva* he 'gathered together' the meaning of the *Siva-Sutras* and together with his other commentaries on the latter, handed them down to his pupil Pradyumna Bhatta (c 900 AD) who was also a cousin of his, being the son of his maternal uncle. Pradyumna Bhatta in his turn handed the teaching to his son Prajnarjuna and he to his pupil Mahadeva. The latter again transmitted it to his son Shrikantha Bhatta from whom Bhaskara, son of Divakara, received them and wrote his *Varttika* on them. In the *Varttika* of Bhaskara, therefore, we have what Kallata must have taught as the meaning of *Siva-Sutras* —a mere religious doctrine without entering into any philosophical reasoning in its support.

Yet in a country like India, where philosophic reasoning has from early times played such an important part, it was essential for any system of religion to give full philosophical reasons in its support, if it was at all to hold its own especially in an age when Buddhism exercised such a great influence as it did in Kashmir about the time the

Advaita Saivism as represented by the Trika made its appearance. This need must have been felt almost at the beginning — a need which was not met by the writings of Kallata. So the philosophical side was attended to by Somananda, who like Kallata may have been a pupil of Vasugupta himself. While Kallata may be said to have handed down the doctrine as a system of religion, Somananda supplied the logical reasoning in its support and made a system of Advaita Philosophy of what was at first taught as a system of faith. And thus was founded the Pratyabijna-Sastra which may be regarded as the philosophy proper of the Trika. It deals rationally with the doctrines, tries to support them by reasoning and refutes the views of the opponents. The originator of this Sastra, the Siddha Somananda (c. 850-900 AD) was most probably a pupil of Vasugupta. He is also spoken of as the originator of reasoning *(Tarkasya-karta)* in support of the Trika.

His work which lays the foundation of the philosophy of the Trika was the *Siva-dristi.* He also composed a *Vritti* on this work, but this, with other works of his are now only known by name and from quotations from them.

Somananda tells us a good deal about his lineage. He claims to have descended from the sage Durvasa through the line of that sage's son Tryambaka. The 19th generation of the latter (first 15 being 'mind born') was represented by Ananda of whom Somananda was born.

We know from Abhinavagupta the period when Somananda must have lived. Narrating his own succession from Somananda in the line of discipleship, Abhinavagupta says that Somananda's pupil was the famous Utpala, son of Udayakara. He was followed by Lakshmana Gupta (c. 950-1000 AD) who was the teacher of Abhinavagupta. We know that the latter lived in the first quarter of the 11th century and thus Somananda must have flourished towards the end of the ninth century AD.

Thus it will be seen that the origin of both the *Faith* and *Philosophy* of Kashmir Saivism — as the teachings of the Agama and Spanda *Sastras* on the one hand and of the Pratyabijna *Sastra* on the other may respectively be called — had their birth towards the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century AD; and they were founded by men who were regarded as holy sages.

The work of Somananda was carried on in greater detail by Utpala who wrote *Pratyabijna-Sutra* which may be regarded as the basic book of Kashmir Saivism containing in its essence all the fundamental

ideas which were later elaborated by Abhinavagupta. This is the first use of the word Pratyabijna and the very high status of this work may be inferred from the fact that after it was written, the entire system came to be known as 'Pratyabijna-Sastra'. And finally, gathering together the literature upon the subject and creatively developing and correlating all the fundamental ideas, Abhinavagupta raised the Kashmir Saiva philosophy to its highest pinnacle. His *Tantraloka* and *Pratyabijna-Vimarsini* though claiming to be mere expositions of the *Pratyabijna-Sutra,* are original works of very high merit.

Among the subsequent writers on the 'Pratyabijna-Sastra' may be mentioned Kshemaraja Yogaraja, Jayaratha and Sivopadhyaya.

Kshemaraja, a pupil of Abhinavagupta, wrote the *Siva-sutravimarsini* and several other works. Yogaraja who was a pupil apparently of both Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja is the author of a commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Parmartha-Sara.* Jayaratha who lived in the 12th century AD wrote a commentary on *Tantraloka* and Sivopadhyaya who came much later (18th century AD) commented upon Abhinavagupta's *Vijnana-bhairava.*

After this date we do not find any great writer on Saivism of Kashmir, although its study and practice was and to some extent still is, continued by outstanding pandits of Kashmir.

In addition to the three main divisions of the Saiva literature we have a number of devotional compositions called *"Stotras"* which give expression to philosophical doctrines of the system in a devotional form: and also a number of compositions in the daily practices and ceremonials to be performed by a Saiva. The latter keep the doctrine a living force in the everyday life of the great mass of Kashmiri Brahmins who are the followers of this cult.

Kashmir Saivism has now attracted the attention of theologians and scholars in the rest of India and abroad and has become an object of serious study by them. It is, in fact, "a virgin field of research, and will repay the most conscientious labour of philosophers for many years to come."[18]

The Philosophy of Trika

Unlike other forms of Saivism, the Trika is essentially a monistic doctrine. In this it is much in consonance with the Advaistic Vedanta. This emphasis on monism may be as a result of the influence of Sankaracharya, but we must at the same time recognise that Kashmir

18. *The Cultural Heritage of India,* Vol. IV, p. 79.

Saivism has also fundamental differences with Vedanta as preached by the great Sankara. It does not, for instance, emphasise either the infallibility or the eternity of the Vedas and Upanisadas, nor does it deny the reality of the world.

Abhinavagupta boldly asserts that he must give first place to facts of experience, second to reason and only third place to the scriptures. This attitude towards the Vedas can perhaps be explained by the fact that Kashmir Saivism has absorbed much of the influence of Samkhya and Buddhism. The first is semi-heterodox, being atheistic and the second frankly heterodox. This influence of heterodox philosophies particularly of Buddhism, has resulted in a liberal attitude in extending the right of philosophical knowledge to all sections of society, irrespective of sex, caste or position.

The Vedanta holds that appearances are unreal and illusory, and that the one reality is what lies behind them all, the Brahmin. Their presence is only due to *maya* and will continue only till *moksha* (salvation) is attained. They then cease to exist. The Trika, on the other hand, holds that appearances are real, in the sense they are aspects of the real and emanate from it. Nothing can exist outside Paramesvara and appearances thus cannot be unreal. They cannot be merely the creations of *maya.*

Absolute Reality

The ultimate reality is variously designated in Trika as Atman, Chit, Chaitanya, Siva, Paramasiva. It is the true and innermost self in every being, is a changeless reality of the nature of a purely experiencing principle, as distinguished from whatever may assume the form of either the experienced or of the means of experience. It is pure consciousness, self-consciousness, integral or supreme experience, the benign "One, the highest Good and Bliss, the Supreme Lord, formless and yet informed with all forms and free from all limitations in space and time."[19]

Reality is ineffable and beyond all descriptions, yet the Trika tries to formulate a philosophy about Its nature. But this philosophy is, it should be understood, not regarding the reality as it is in itself, but only as the creator or manifestor of the universe.

And, as the underlying reality in everything, Siva is all pervading; and at the same time all transcending. He has primarily a twofold aspect — an immanent aspect in which He pervades the universe, and

19. *Tantrasara*, p. 6.

a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. Indeed, the universe with all its variety of objects and means of experience is nothing but a manifestation of the immanent aspect of Paramasiva Himself. It has no other basis or ingredient in itself.

Siva as Sakti

This aspect of His is called Sakti (Power), which, being only an aspect is not in any way different from, or independent of, Paramasiva, but is one and the same with Him. Like fire and its burning power, Siva and Sakti are the same identical fact, though they are spoken as distinct. Considered as purely transcendent, Siva is *sava,* dead as it were; but in truth there is perfect equilibrium between Siva and Sakti, and as such the integrality is designated as Parmasiva. If anything, Sakti is His Creative Power, and is spoken of as His feminine aspect.

Sakti-Tattva or Ideal Manifestation

In the Trika philosophy we find a lot of emphasis laid on the qualities of *'Prakasa'* and *'Vimarsa'* the attributes of the Individual as well as the universal self. *'Prakasa'* is the capacity of the self to serve as a 'mirror' of psychical images. It 'shines' just as a mirror which reflects a lamp, becomes itself luminous. 'Vimarsa' is Sakti, it is vibration; it is Siva's awareness of Himself as the integral and all-comprehensive ego. When there is the reflection of Siva in Sakti, there emerges in His heart the sense of 'I'. 'Vimarsa' refers to the capacity to know itself in all its purity. The universal self also shines and knows Itself; but whereas the individual self is affected by external cause, the Absolute can shine only by Its own light.

Thus, while *'Vimarsa'* is taken to be the cause of the manifestation and dissolution of the universe, it is so only in the wider sense of being Sakti and not as the reflection as 'I'. Or, in other words, while everything is a manifestation out of *'Vimarsa'*, everything does not have *'Vimarsa'*. A jar or a pot, for instance, does not have 'Vimarsa' or the sense of 'I'. So the more of self-consciousness one has, the more of *'Vimarsa'* also one has and thus is nearer to Siva or pure consciousness. That is why the practical discipline of the system enjoins the development of the sense of 'I' as being the whole, as identical with the universe.

And since Chit, Illumination, cannot be without self-consciousness, it therefore sees itself in Sakti which is compared to a mirror. Sakti is thus Siva's power of turning upon Himself. *Chit-Sakti,* the power of

self-consciousness, entails *ananda*, enjoyment and wonderment on the part of Siva; bliss gives rise to *ichchha*, desire to create; desire to create cannot be fulfilled unless there is *jnana*, knowledge of what is to be created and how; this knowledge is followed by the actual creation or manifestation, the power of which is *Kriya-sakti*.

With these five principal aspects of His Sakti, of which there are in reality an infinite number of modes, Paramasiva manifests Himself — or which is the same thing He manifests His Sakti — as the Universe. And He does this of his own free and independent will without the use of any other material save His own Power, and in Himself as the basis of the Universe. And since there is nothing apart from, independent of, Siva, the elements of the Universe can be nothing but Siva Himself.

Thus in reality the universe is only an 'expansion' of the Power of Paramasiva in His aspect of Sakti. By this aspect He becomes both and pervades the universe thus produced while yet He remains the ever transcendent Chaitanya without in any way being affected by this manifestation.

This manifestation is actually a phase of the eternal cycle of manifestation and dissolution on the part of Sakti. When she 'expands' or opens herself out *(unmesa)* the universe comes to be *(Sristi)* and when she 'gathers' or closes herself up *(nimisa)*, the universe disappears as a manifestation *(Pralaya)*. There have been countless universes before and there will be equally countless number of them in the endless futurity of time, each successive universe being determined in its character by its predecessor by a kind of causal necessity.

But why does the Absolute manifest Itself at all, why this never-ending process of *Sristi* and *Pralaya?* Abhinavagupta answers this question in a lucid way. We cannot, he says, ask why a thing does something which is involved in its very constitution. It is, for instance, absurd to ask *why* fire burns and *why* water quenches thirst. The only possible answer is that it is the very *nature* of fire to burn and of water to satisfy thirst. It is the very nature of consciousness to assume many forms and Siva's self-imposition of limitation upon Himself and also His breaking the fetters and returning to His native glory may both be called as His *Krida* or play.[20]

Anutva or Atomicity

The account of the process of manifestation of the universe, as given by the Trika, is very elaborate and complicated. *Unmesa* or

20. *Bodhapanca dasika*,.

opening out is in one sense a limitation of Siva Who, to all appearances, disappears. In fact the universe which is the collective name of the system of limited subjects and objects, cannot come into manifestation unless Siva assumes limitation. This power of obscuration or self-limitation is called *tirodhana,* and the actual limitation takes the form of *anutva* or atomicity. It is also known as *sankocha* or contraction.

Because of this contraction there is effected a dichotomy in Siva, who is consciousness-power. In this dichotomy the two attributes namely consciousness *(bodha)* and power or independence *(Swatantrya)* get separated from one another. Though neither of them is completely devoid or empty of the other, we can for all practical purposes say that the aspect of consciousness loses the integral self-consciousness. And thus Siva does not see the universe to be identical with Himself. In other words, since the universe is originally Sakti, consciousness becomes static and sterile and power becomes blind of the awareness of consciousness. Atomicity therefore is the condition of powerless awareness and senseless power.

Evolution of Material Universe

So far we have been dealing with the evolutionary stages in the manifestation of the cosmic experiences of transcendental unlimited beings or divinities, which stages necessarily lead to similar experiences on the part of limited beings. This brings the exponents of the Trika to the standing difficulty of all philosophy, *viz,* the transition from the unlimited to the limited; from the perfect and pure because unlimited to the imperfect and impure, because limited. This transition, predicates the Trika, is effected by Sakti acting in her aspect of the Principle of Negation in a limited form, *viz,* obscuration, a power or force called *maya.*

For, after the primary limitation of atomicity, Siva undergoes a secondary limitation with the help of *maya*, and then Siva is described as Purusa. *Maya* has the function of obscuring and thereby limiting the Absolute Experience. Under its influence relations begin to appear, which by their very nature are limited in themselves. The Trika recognises five such relations, namely, *Kala* or limited duration; *Niyati* or regulation in space; *Raga* or attachment to particular things; *Vidya* or limited knowledge; and *Kala* or the power of limited creation. These five categories along with *maya* are known as the six *Kanchuka,* meaning sheath or cloak, which 'wrap up' the limited individuals into these relations.

And thus Siva as Purusa is limited in time and space and has limited knowledge, authorship, and interest or enjoyment. *Maya* also provides location and object to the Purusa by evolving the physical universe. And as the process of opening out or manifestation of Sakti proceeds, the distance between the 'subject' and 'object' *aham* and *idam* which originally in the Paramasiva was nothing beyond a polarity of the two, increases till they are sundered apart.

Simultaneously with the manifestation of Purusa, the 'Prakriti' is also evolved. The Purusa is only a limited form of the Absolute. It cannot exist without relations. And relations necessarily involve some other term to give meaning to them. The coming into existence of 'Prakriti' is thus inevitable. Thus Trika does not give an independent reality to 'Prakriti' as the Samkhya does, for according to it, 'Prakriti' represents a stage in the evolution of the universe out of Paramasiva.

Once 'Prakriti' is manifested, other categories soon make their appearance. The first are the three principles of mental operations — Buddhi, Ahamkara and Manas. Buddhi is the impersonal state of conscious, or rather it is that state which holds on to general ideas as distinct from ideas of particular facts. Ahamkara is that which gathers and stores up the memories of personal experiences. It identifies and assimilates the experiences of the present; and it thus constitutes our personal ego. Manas is that which seeks and singles out particular sensations from among a whole group of them. It builds up particular images and coordinates them.

Perception, however, is also bound up with our receptors or sense organs on the one hand and the actual stimuli of nature on the other. Moreover, as a result of perceptions we are normally led to actions and response as well. These considerations explain the 'Tattvas' which emerge next. There are the five senses — the Jananendriyas — and the five powers of movement or action — the Karmendriyas. There are also the subtle entities which make possible the actual perception of things. These subtle, invisible realities are 'sound-as-such' as distinguished from particular sounds; 'colour-as-such' as distinct from specific colours like blue or green; and so on with reference to every sensation. These 'essences' of sensation are called 'Tanmatras', and there are naturally five of them — Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. Tanmatra, corresponding to the auditory, the tactual, the visual, the palatic and the olfactory sensations.

When this stage is reached the Purusa is almost ready for its

practical existence and the last step is materialisation, that is the emergence of actual material elements. These are the five 'Bhutas' traditionally recognised by all ancient thinkers — fire, earth, water, air and sky.

Bondage and Liberation

And so we come to a close of the metaphysical part of Trika philosophy. No philosophical system can rest content merely with the formulation of a chain of realities. There are other problems about the nature and origin of human knowledge, of the relation of cause and effect and above all the basic question of the bondage of the human soul and the ways and means of its liberation.

Siva as Sakti manifests Himself as a correlated order of knowers knowables, and means of knowledge. This threefold self-division of Siva presupposes a limitation imposed by Siva upon Himself. The self-limited Siva is designated the *Pasu* or the 'animal', Jiva, Samsarin, etc. The signs of the Pasu are false identification of the self with the not-self ascribing not-self to the self, having limited authorship, knowledge, interest, pervasion and duration, and being subject to causalty.

The atomic or basic limitation or impurity of the bound self, *(anavamala)* is reinforced by two other impurities, namely *mayaiymala* and *karmamala.* The former represents the whole series of categories, beginning from the covers or *Kanchuka,* that create the physical organism on the subjective side, and evolve the physical world down to the earth on the objective side. The latter *(karmamala)* is responsible for continuing the fetters or embodiment. It is due to this impurity that the Purusa becomes subject to good or bad acts, and becomes entangled in repeated births and deaths.

To realise the unfettered condition, to recognise oneself as that which has become or even is, everything, to have unlimited power to know, enjoy and manifest self-bliss, to be infinite and eternal, to be completely free from and independent of *Niyati,* that is, regulation or causalty — this is the destiny of the Pasu. To be, or rather to recognise oneself as Siva is his goal.

Obviously, the limited individual is subject to ignorance *(ajnana),* which according to the Trika is twofold, namely *paurusa* and *baudha.* *Paurusa ajnana* is the innate ignorance in the very soul of man. It is the primal limitation, the original impurity or *anavamala,* a consequence of the limitation taken willingly and playfully by Siva upon Himself, and is not, therefore, removable by the bound soul's own efforts.

Siva alone can liquidate it through His dispensation of grace *(anugraha)*, called technically *Saktipata* or the descent of Siva's force to break this limitation. Divine grace leads to the destruction of all fetters *(pasakshya)* and the restoration of the divinity in man *(Sivatva-yojana)*. How and when this force will descend cannot be indicated because His nature is freedom and spontaneity.

But in spite of this spiritual gain coming to the soul, the Jiva or the bound individual may not know it, for he has to know things through the instrument of his *buddhi,* his intelligence which is gross and impure. So, actually speaking, the Jiva has to adopt other means to know and enjoy his newly won spiritual gain.

The most important of these is *diksa* or initiation. The Trika says that as a result of *Saktipat* one is brought to a real *guru. Diksa* awakens the Kriyasakti in the limited soul which ultimately means the soul's ability to absorb and integrate the 'it' or the objective seemingly separate from itself, within its own soul. This is the dawning of the *paurusajnana,* the true knowledge about the real and ultimate nature of the Purusa.

To be able to enjoy in life this inherent, reawakened Sivahood, to attain *jivanmukti* or liberation from the bonds of ignorance even while the soul is associated with the body, it is necessary that *bauddha-jnana,* or knowledge of this internal liberated condition through *buddhi,* be attained also. This can be achieved by the purification of *buddhi*, the means of which are the study and deeper understanding of *Sastras.* It does not mean merely scholarship or repetition of logical formulae. It demands a deeper discipline and it is this latter that provides a basis for the practical injunctions of the Saiva religion.

Paths to Liberation

The religious literature of Kashmir Saivism is very vast and much of it falls outside the scope of our present review. The borderline between religion and philosophy, however, has never been very sharp in India. And the masters of the Trika philosophy have also laid down the means of liberation of human soul from bondage. It is remarkable that these are open to all human beings without any distinction of sex, creed, caste or colour. Trika also forbids suppression of any thought in opposition to Saivism.

Traditionally, four different means or *'Upayas'* are recognised. The first is immediate through special grace. In this path to liberation no active process on the part of the individual is involved. Sakti Herself is

said to be the direct means, working through the teacher. This is known as 'Anupaya' or 'Anandopaya.'

The second method is through destruction of the 'Vikalpas' leading to definite knowledge. In this method the strong urge and 'will-to-know' of the individual is emphasised and it is, therefore, known as the 'Ichchopaya'.

In the third category falls the so-called 'Saktopaya', in which Intuition is given a dominant place. This method involves yogic perfection and owes much to the influence of Samkhya and yoga philosophies.

The fourth and the last means to liberation is the sum-total of all religious observances including meditation, repetition of the sacred name and other external practices.

Through these means or 'Upayas' the limited individual, in spite of his being deficient in power *(sakti-daridra)*, attains to the glorious knowledge of his own true self. In other words he is liberated from *maya* and 'unwrapped' of her *five Kanchukas* or sheaths.

Harmony the Watchword of Trika

The Trika, however, does not stop with the deliverance of the soul from *maya*, from the delusion of duality: it goes further to the concept of divinisation of the soul, which means the recognition of its own identity with Paramasiva. And this recognition is the same as realising identity with everything and also freedom from everything. When this state is achieved, the individual feels that he is "nothing in particular and yet all things together." Thus, in a sense, harmony is the watchword of the practical spiritual discipline of the Trika.

It will thus be seen that the Trika philosophy promises to satisfy all sides of human nature, of knowledge, love, and will. Siva being unitary consciousness as such, the realisation of Siva gives knowledge of everything by identity with everything; and Siva being at constant play with His own Sakti, there is ample scope for *bhakti,* devotion or love; also to recognise oneself as Paramasiva means mastery and lordship of *sakti* and thus implies sovereign and unrestricted will. Further the theistic element is brought out by the rejection of the yoga view that release is attained by the unaided effort of the spiritual aspirant, and by the admission that the final step of liberation is provided by *anugraha* or the grace of Siva Himself.

Relation with South Indian Saivism

This in brief is the doctrine and philosophy of Kashmir Saivism

which reached its apogee in the 12th century AD. We have already noted some of the fundamental differences between this school of Saiva philosophy and that of South Indian Saivism. That both have also close affinities is quite apparent from the fact that Kashmir Saivism and Saiva-sidhanta build up their doctrine from the basic conception of Advaita or monism. The history of the origin and development of Saivism in India is an interesting study. It clearly reveals the cultural unity of India from extreme north to extreme south from time immemorial. How the current of art and philosophy passed from the north to the south and *vice versa* is shown by the free exchange of books, and visits of saints and savants to Kashmir and from there to south India.

It was, for instance, as a result of the direct impact of Sankaracharya that the Kashmir Saivists transformed the older form of dualistic Saivism as prevailing in Kashmir before the revelation of *Siva-Sutras,* to that of the basic conception of the Vedanta. But South Indian Saivism itself traces its origin to Kashmir. It is known that Thirumular, one of the earliest teachers of Saivism in the South — he is placed some time between the first and the ninth centuries AD — came from the land of the Pratyabhijna school that is Kashmir. It is also known that the Cholas of the tenth and 11th centuries AD imported many Saiva teachers from the north to come and teach Saivism to their people. Recently several important manuscripts of works of famous Kashmirian Saiva philosophers in Sarada and some south Indian scripts have been found in Kerala and Madras.

"How much older Kashmir Saivism may have been in its origin," observes Dr. Nilakantha Sastri, "is not easy to determine. There are elements in common between the dogmatics of Kashmir Saivism and those of South Indian Saivism. Yet, in their philosophy, they differ perceptibly, the Kashmir school being idealistic and the South Indian pluralist in metaphysics. The historical relation between the two forms is not easy to decide, though the mention of Brahmins from Kashmir in south Indian inscriptions may lead one to infer that South Indian Saivism is also ultimately derived from Kashmir. Literary and epigraphic evidence from south India and Java and other Indian clonies of the East also connects the origin and spread of Saivism with the march of Agastya from the north to the south, and his further progress towards the Eastern lands."[21]

Another illustration of the cultural unity of India from ancient

21. *The Cultural Heritage of India,* Vol. IV, pp. 77-78.

times is furnished by the fact that in order to combat Saivism at its fountain-head, Ramanuja (11th century AD), the leader of the rival Vaisnava creed, travelled all the way from Madras to Kashmir, which continued to be the premier centre of Saivism, and to influence the religious and philosophic thought of India.

Diffusion of Sanskrit Learning

We have so far surveyed briefly the contribution of Kashmirian poets, dramatists, writers and philosophers to Sanskrit language and literature. This naturally presupposes an extensive study by them of the works on various subjects written by authors from the rest of India. The huge mass of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Devangari and Sarada scripts found all over the State in recent years, shows the extent of the scope and variety of Sanskrit texts and studies and their diffusion among the people. George Buhler who toured the State in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in 1875, found an incredibly large number of works on Vedas, Puranas, Mahatmyas, Poetry, Plays and Fables, Poetics, Metrics, Grammar, Kosas, Law and Polity, Samkhya, Vedanta and Saiva Philosophy, Nyaya, Purva Mimansa, Astronomy, Astrology, Vaidya-Sastra, etc. The discovery of manuscripts on such varied subjects left him amazed. "I must premise," he records, "that I do not pretend to give all that is valuable in them. I have had no time to read several millions of *slokas* and to compare them with the verses known from Indian books. A thorough study of such a collection would take up the whole time of a student during several years, and I even doubt if any man can sufficiently become master of all the various *Sastras* represented, in order to estimate the books at their proper value."

Another feature of Sanskrit learning in Kashmir was the special and exclusive recensions of some famous and important classics, like the Mahabharata and Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*. Buhler's discovery, for instance, of the Kashmirian recension of the latter was a significant moment in the history of the controversy as to the original and authentic form of the text of the play. From a comparison of this text readings of which went back to the end of the 12th or to the beginning of the 13th century, with the then printed editions, it appeared that the Kashmirian version agreed neither with the Bengali redaction nor with the Devanagari. Pischel, however, gave his final verdict on the controversy in his posthumously published second edition of the play in the Harvard Oriental Series, in which he

assesses the value of the Kashmir recension.

In the case of Mahabharata, the matter passed through a similar controversy. The Kasmirian recension discovered by Buhler was exhaustively made use of by the late Dr. Sukthankar who revealed the importance of that recension to Indologists in the February 1921, issue of the "Vividhajnanavistara" (Bombay), where the extent of the Adi Parva is quoted to bring home the conclusion that much reliance cannot be placed upon the current text of the Parva Sangraha figures of *Adhyayas* and *Slokas.*

Similarly with regard to the *Bhagvadgita* many Kashmiri pandits like Kesava, Vasugupta, Anandavardhana, Ramakantha, Bhaskara, Abhinavagupta and a number of others, wrote commentaries on it. The earliest of the known Kashmiri commentaries on this sacred book of the Hindus, is that of Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir Saivism. This commentary called *Vasvi-tika* is not extant. Only the first six chapters are perhaps still to be found incorporated in another *Tika* on the *Bhagvadgita,* called *Lasaki* by Rajanka Lasakaka, of which manuscripts are available.

The second cf the known commentaries is by Anandavardhana. Next comes Ramakantha's commentary called the *Sarvatobadra,* which is a very extensive work. Besides these, Bhaskara is referred to by Abhinavagupta as having commented upon the Gita. Abhinavagupta himself is the author of still another commentary which has been before modern scholars since 1912.

It was in 1930 that Dr. Schrader published a paper on the Kashmirian recension of the *Gita* which evoked considerable interest among scholars. Almost all Kashmiri writers prior to the 12th century AD refer to a text of the *Gita* which differs in its text from the vulgate adopted by Sankaracharya and later non-Kashmiri writers. The most important of such variations are the addition of certain verses and omission of a few others. This has given rise to a controversy which in the words of Kunhan Raja, "has assumed in the region of Indological studies an importance too big in dimension to be ignored by any serious student. The problem has come to stay."

Not only did the Kashmiri scholars comment upon classical works like those of Kalidasa, but they also studied, and wrote commentaries on, important works produced in Sanskrit. For instance the *Yudhisthiravijaya,* the premier 'kavya' of Vasudev Bhattatiri of distant Kerala was commented upon by Ranakantha of Kashmir.

No wonder the learned Pandits of Kashmir and their works were

in demand at the courts of several enlightened princes in India, at important assemblies of thinkers and writers and at the Sanskrit Universities in the rest of India. And it was the ambition of every student and lover of Sanskrit language and literature and Indian philosophy to go to Kashmir to drink deep at the fountain of knowledge and wisdom that gushed forth from the "Land of Sarada, the Goddess of Learning."

Dance, Drama and Music

The cultivation of fine arts by the people of Kashmir has an ancient background. Some terracotta tiles of the fourth century AD excavated at Harwan depict a *danseuse* in a dance pose and other tiles show a female musician playing a *dholak*. We find several references to dance, drama and music in the pages of the *Rajatarangini*. It was, however, in the seventh and eighth centuries AD that these arts attained their full vigour. In fact no student of classical Indian Dance can ignore or by-pass the commentaries on Bharata's *Natya-Sastra*, and original works on Dance, like those of Udbhatta, Lollapata, Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, and the last but greatest of them all, Abhinavagupta. The Tandava of Siva is described in *Harvijaya-kavya* by Rajanaka Ratnakara.

The finer traditions in music and dance have, however, been preserved in India by the hereditary professional artistes who passed them down from generation to generation. But unfortunately, the history of Kashmir after the 11th century AD is written in civil wars, invasions, repressions and bloodshed, intermittently filled in with sad accounts of famines, fires and epidemics. No wonder the traditions in music and dance vanished and what has been left is only a poor specimen of their former glory.

As elsewhere in India, classical dancing in Kashmir also had a religious background, the temple dancers having played a significant role in its development. The first reference to dancing in the *Rajatarangini* is about king Jalauka, the son and successor of the emperor Asoka, who is credited with being an ardent worshipper of Siva and a lover of music and dance. While worshipping at the shrine of Siva, "a hundred among the ladies of the seraglio who had risen to dance, in honour of the god, at the time fixed for dancing and singing, he gave out of joy to Jyestharudra."[22] Another king, Pratapaditya II, who had fallen in love with the wife of a rich merchant,

22. *Raj.*, *i*-151.

but whom he could not marry in the lifetime of her husband, was induced by the latter "to accept her from a temple as a dancing girl put there by her husband on account of her skill in dancing."[23]

It appears from another passage in the Chronicles that dancing in temples was a hereditary calling with certain families. While out in the jungle, Lalitaditya is recorded to have noticed two beautiful damsels dancing gracefully to the accompaniment of a drum and other musical instruments. On being questioned as to the purpose of their dancing in the jungle, they declared: "We come from a family of professional dancers and we live in the village yonder. By the direction of our mothers who got their living here, we perform at this spot the dancing, which our descent makes incumbent. This custom handed down by tradition, has become fixed in our family."[24] Lalitaditya had the site excavated and, to his amazement, found a large temple containing two beautiful images of Siva and Visnu, which he installed in two temples in his new city of Parihaspura.

That this profession was not looked down upon is apparent from another passage wherein it is mentioned that king Chakravarman married two professional dancing girls, sisters Hamsi and Nagalata and although they belonged to a lower caste, he made Hamsi his first queen who "enjoyed among the king's wives the privilege of being fanned with the Chowries".[25] Similarly Utkarsa (1089 AD) married Sahaja a dancing girl belonging to a temple, whom "he had seen on the dancing-stage".[26] Another king Uccala, married a dancing girl named Jayamati who became later his chief queen.[27] King Harsa personally taught dancing girls how to act and dance.[28]

A study of the sculptures and reliefs on the walls and columns of old temples reveals figures of dancers with ornaments and graceful styles of hair-dressing. It appears that classical Indian dancing as systematised by Bharata was in vogue in Kashmir, and was assiduously studied and practised by the artistes. Jayapida, for instance, is known to have been "acquainted with this Sastra" and could therefore relish the dance performance of a "Gauda (Bengal) artiste, named Kamla, who performed in the temple of Kartikeya."[29]

23. ibid., iv-36.
24. *Raj.*, iv-269-70.
25. ibid., v-361-85.
26. ibid., vii-858.
27. ibid., vii-1460-62.
28. ibid., vii-1440-41.
29. ibid., iv-422-23.

It was, however, in the 11th century AD that king Kalasa introduced ballet dancing and choral music which became popular.[30] But classical dancing continued to hold its ground even after the Hindu rule came to an end in the 14th century AD. We have, for instance, a graphic description of classical dance performance at the court of King Zain-ul-abidin, from the pen of Srivara. There is a reference to the Tandava dance of Siva in several verses of the *Rajatarangini*,[31] The Tandava represents the five activities *(Panchaurya)*, namely creation, preservation, incarnation, destruction and deliverance, and well represented the mood and attitude of kings and people of Kashmir in the days of the later Hindu rulers. Dance performances were invariably accompanied by music played on lutes, flutes, Hudduka or bag-pipe, and drums.

It appears that dance and dramatic performances were generally given in temples for both the common people and the nobility. The kings had their own troupe of performers and a permanent theatre *(natyamandapa)* was a feature of palace and temple architecture.[32] We also learn that there were theatres with leather-cushioned seats.

Side by side with the classical music and dance there seems to have existed also folk dancing and music, performances of which were held in the open. From a passage in the *Rajatarangini* we learn that these were at the mercy of the weather and the audience would disperse pell-mell when caught in a rainstorm.[33]

Drama also seems to have flourished in ancient Kashmir, along with dance. As already noted, Kashmirian authors wrote a number of dramas, which it seems were staged by professional artistes. References to theatrical performances, the stage and strolling players are common in the *Rajatarangini*.[34] The stage was at an elevated position, lighted up with multi-coloured lamps. The players would dress appropriately and used yellow orpiment and other emollients and colours for their make-up.[35] The comic parts were played with great effect, and generally depicted the life of a rapacious Kayastha or a newly-rich Damara. Apart from earnings by their performances, the strolling players received customary gifts from the king and

30. ibid., vii-606.
31. ibid., viii-2931.
32. *Raj.*, vii-707.
33. ibid., vii-1606.
34. ibid., vii-285; viii-1950,1970,2178.
35. ibid., viii-2825.

nobles on festivals and fairs.

Music was cultivated as a fine art by both the king and the commoner. The *Rajatrangini* supplies several clues to the development of music in ancient Kashmir. We are, for instance, told that music was played in Buddhist *viharas* in the time of Jalauka, son of Asoka.[36] The king was himself a lover of music and maintained a troupe of dancing girls and musicians. At the Hindu sacred shrines and in temples, music was played to the accompaniment of big drums, cymbals, etc. At several religious ceremonies, particularly connected with Tantric worship, music was a must. Mamma a blind musician was, for instance, specially employed by the superintendent of a *matha* to play at the time of Tantric worship.[37]

The kings, however, were the patrons of music and invariably listened to songs and the music of the lute and the flute at bedtime.[38] Some of them were great adepts in this art. King Kalasa created a taste among the Kashmiris for light operatic songs *(upanga-gita)*.[39] His son, "Harsa, amusing his father in public with songs as if he were a singer, kept up his establishment with the presents the former gave him".[40] He also gave music lessons to several courtiers, among whom was Kanaka, the uncle of our historian Kalhana. He was a great connoisseur of music and "to one named Bhimanayaka, who could play charming music, he gave when pleased with his performance on a drum, an elephant together with a female elephant."[41]

We are, however, given a sordid picture of the life of professional musicians of the time particularly those who supplied instrumental music to the singer or the dancer. They are depicted as addicted to keeping late hours, eating much meat and drinking incessantly."[42] Perhaps it was a later development, result no doubt of the general laxity in morals among kings and courtiers.

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* we find that the premier musical instruments were the lute, flute and the drum.[43] Classical music was played on these. Besides, there is a mention of Hudukka

36. *Raj.*, i-140.
37. ibid., vii-299.
38. ibid., ii-126: viii-2398-99.
39. Raj., vii-606.
40. ibid., vii-613-14.
41. ibid., vii-1116-17.
42. ibid., vii-285.
43. ibid., ii-126: vii 285, 1601: viii-2398-99.

which may be compared to a bag-pipe.[44] In the temples music was accompanied by the big drum, conch and cymbals.[45]

Side by side with classical music, a kind of folk music also existed in ancient Kashmir. *Chhakri* which is so popular these days, can be traced to the time of Kalhana (12th century AD) and even earlier. We are told that Bhiksacara who occupied the throne for a few months indulged in "playing music on earthen pots, brass vessels and other such instruments".[46] There would be dancing and singing with pantomimic movements of the head, hands and feet.

Painting

With exquisite natural scenery all around them, Kashmiris as may well be expected developed an artistic eye as also a mode of expression of their aesthetic qualities, which distinguished their art and architecture. The distinct school of architecture which is depicted in the large number of ruins of old stone temples dotting the Valley, has received due recognition from art critics and connoisseurs. But the allied art of painting practised through the centuries, has escaped attention. Several factors are responsible for it. In the first place a large number of old and beautiful paintings and book illustrations were taken away by European collectors towards the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, and whatever little remained was in the possession of people most of whom were ignorant of their value as treasures of art.

Besides, the non-existence of mural paintings either in the old stone temples or the medieval mosques, has left a gap in the history of painting in Kashmir, for, frescoes have long been associated with the development of Indian art. The ancient architect seems to have laid greater emphasis on sculpture than on painting to decorate his creation, obviously because he worked in stone and believed in its longer life and permanency.

But Kashmiris had a deep love for painting. In his inimitable work, *Kuttanimata-Kavya,* Damodargupta mentions that painting was one of the subjects which women of Kashmir had to learn and cultivate in their youth. It is evident from the several customs and ceremonies which are observed from time immemorial, that painting in Kashmir

44. ibid., vii-1173.
45. ibid., viii-901-2.
46. ibid., viii-98,891.

has ancient traditions. For example, on Gauri-tritya (third of the bright fortnight of Magha) every boy and girl in a Kashmiri Pandit family receives from the priest bright-coloured paintings of gods and goddesses as well as of flowers and animals. On Asarh-saftami (seventh of the bright fortnight of Asarh) every Hindu house is decorated with mural drawings and paintings of the rising sun. During marriage and *Yagnopavit* ceremonies, the doors and windows are painted bright with floral designs and drawings.

Circumstantial information regarding a distinct school of painting previous to Mughal times is supplied by Taranath, a Tibetan Lama, who wrote a history of Buddhism in 1608 AD. After a rather vague and legendary account of ancient artists and their works, he gives some precise details:

"Later, in the days of Buddha-paksa (the identity of this monarch is uncertain) the sculpture and painting of the artist Bimbasara were especially wonderful, and resembled the works of early gods. The number of his followers was exceedingly great, and as he was born in Magadha, the artists of this school were called Madyadesa artists. In the time of King Sila (Probably the celebrated Harsavardhana Siladitya, 606-647 AD), there lived an especially skilful delineator of the gods born in Marwar, named Sringadhara; he left behind him paintings and other masterpieces like those produced by Yakasa. Those who followed his lead were called the old Western School."

After giving an account of the extension of the influence of the Western School to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Nepal, Taranath proceeds to give some information regarding the Kashmir School:

"In Kashmir, too, there were in former times followers of the old Western School of Madhyadesa; later on a certain Hasuraya founded a new school of painting and sculpture, which is called the Kashmir School."[47]

Being the home of Mahayana Buddhism, Kashmiri painters and sculptors carried their art traditions even further north, to Central Asia and China. The aim of the Buddhist artist was to visualise the ideals of his creed: to illustrate by pictorial parables all the beautiful sentiments of his religion. These were designed to appeal to the higher feelings of the spectator. What the political vicissitudes and the natural calamities obliterated in Kashmir, remained preserved in the caves and cities buried under the sands of Central Asia. "Kashmir murals,"

47. Taranath, *History of Buddhism*, trans. by W.T. Heeley, in *Indian Antiquary*, vol. iv, p. 101.

writes Dr. Goetz, "we know only from places outside the Valley: the earlier style in the part of the 'Gandharan' murals in Ming Oi (Kucha) in the northern Tarim Basin, the later, in the frescoes of Mannan and of the 'Red Temple' at Tsaparang in Western Tibet; and illustrated manuscripts have turned up in Tibet. The style of the 'School of Hasuraya' has more vitality than the Bengal miniatures but a harder line, and brighter, but rather cold colours."[48]

Kashmiris appear to have been adepts at painting designs on dress material also, which looked so real that when king Harsa's palace was looted after his defeat at the hands of rebel forces, "some low-caste people eager to get gold, burned clothes which were painted with gold, and then anxiously searched the ashes."[49]

Sculpture

Kashmir has, however, still preserved some good specimens of sculpture and it is not difficult to reconstruct a succinct history of the development of plastic art. Very little has, however, survived of the Kashmiri art of the centuries before the Christian era. At Harwan Buddhist ruins have been excavated, but they are not of earlier than the forth century AD.

The moulded brick tiles unearthed at Harwan depict a unique art trend, in that they do not deal with religious, but with secular themes. We find life and nature as the artist found around him. There are figures of men wearing Central Asian costumes; and curiously enough the relief figures of Parthian horsemen, women, heads and busts appear side by side with early Gupta motifs.[50]

The mouldings on Harwan terracotta tiles cannot, however, be the work of folk-artists. The art seems to have attained a high degree of sophistication and the moulded tiles depict life of the upper class, inasmuch as we find figures of hunting horsemen, men and women sitting on a balcony and enjoying perhaps the beautiful landscape and listening to music from female musicians and recitals of dancers. The physiognomy of the persons depicted on these tiles leaves no doubt of their Central Asian origin — their prominent cheek bones, small eyes, receding forehead and heavy features, all point to the

48. *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, p. 143.
49. *Raj.*, vii-1575.
50. Goetz, op. cit., p.69.

same conclusion. From some letters in the Khrosthi script which went into disuse before the fourth century AD. and also from a small passage on Buddhist creed written in the Brahmi character, it seems the tiles belong to the third-fourth century AD.

Whereas the Harwan tiles are flat, hardly rising out of the background, and are made from a mould and therefore repetitive, the terracotta heads and relievi found at Ushkur are each a single masterpiece produced from moulds carved by hand.

These "later Gandhara" terracottas have been variously put from the fourth to the eighth centuries AD. The figurines depict true Hellinistic influence. Hellinistic art was the dominant cultural force for about a thousand years from the 3rd century BC to 700 AD in what is now called Afghanistan, and its final echoes lasted in Kashmir until the tenth century AD.

Relics similar to Ushkur have recently been unearthed at Akhnur. Situated on the right bank of the Chenab, where the river first enters the plains of the Punjab, Akhnur lay in ancient times on the route between Jammu and Srinagar via the Budil Pass, as well as on the road to Rajauri (ancient Rajapuri). It was thus an important centre of trade and commerce and the headquarters of a flourishing timber industry. Both in treatment and the material used in the lovely terracotta heads with their sombre lines and the serene and peaceful poses, we notice a close affinity to the "Later Gandhara School" on the one hand and to the Gupta art on the other. The fragments collected both at Ushkur and Akhnur consist of pieces of bodies, covered with drapery or partly covered, or even nude; broken bodies of princes, princesses, attendants, holy men, Buddhist mendicants in their drape robes; elaborate decorations that once might have been personal ornaments, such as crowns, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, earrings and the like; architectural fragments of a highly ornamental style, including pillar capitals with vine ornaments, volutes, etc.

Stylistically they seem to inherit two different aesthetics: the mongrel Indo-Roman school of Gandhara as testified by the treatment of the hair, head-dresses and jewellery, as well as the diminutive sizes, while a prominent nose and the heavy fleshy cheeks with almond-eyes seem to indicate the influence of Kusan and Gupta-Mathura art.

The figure sculpture during the Karkota rule was affected by two waves of art — from Central Asia and from Mathura. As the *Stupa* of Chankuna (Lalitaditya's minister of Chinese descent) at Parihaspura

shows, there are T'ang Chinese models found in the Bodhisatva statues there. But then the king's Indian expeditions resulted in a considerable influx of sculptors trained in the late Gupta tradition. There must have been a surplus of sculptors in Central India then because in those years Indian prosperity was dwindling. Whether they came voluntarily or were forced to come by Lalitaditya, we cannot ascertain. But in any case we find at Martand reliefs in the best late Gupta style around the plinth of the great central shrine, and likewise on those of the subsidiary temples flanking it on both sides. "They are very elegant, mannered, somewhat sensuous, fashionable, often even sophisticated. Their costume, on the other hand, generally goes back to Gandhara and Sassanian fashions; which then must still have prevailed in Kashmir."[51]

But most of the sculptures found on the walls, on the entrance to the temple and on staircases, depicting the Sun-god, goddesses, or King Lalitaditya with his queens and priests, are the work of local artists, trained no doubt by the late Gupta master. Their modelling is no doubt less sensitive, and more static, but instead they have a vitality and strength which for the next 200 years was the hallmark of Kashmir sculpture. "Also iconographically they are interesting; for they have preserved quite a number of types which otherwise are rare in India but which are well known to us from Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia and Champa as imports from India — e.g., many 'Tantric' types, or Vishnu riding on Garuda, etc."[52]

Sculptural art of distinct Kashmirian characteristics — a real sysnthesis of the influences from Gandhara and Gupta schools plus the elegance in details and symmetrical proportions in body and look stamped by the Kashmirian artists — reached its apogee under the rule of the Utpala dynasty. The four-headed Vishnu, heavily ornamented and clad in *dhoti* with a dagger attached to the jewelled girdle at the waist, is the most popular figure of the period. The powerful frame of the body exhibits vigour and discipline and the emotional expression of the face is in sharp contrast to the passionless, calm features of the Buddha and Bodhisatvas of the sculptures found at Pandrenthan and Parihaspura. Other sculptures too, for example, Kamadeva seated between his consorts, Rati and Priti, Krisna amid his Gopis, Ganga, Yamuna, Trimurti, Ardhanareeswara, Ganesa and Laksmi, icons so much varied, reveal the same innate emotion, depth of feeling and above all vigour.

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51. Goetz, *Art and Letters*, vol, xxvii., p. 7.
52. ibid., p. 7.

Architecture

"Of all the arts," observes Percy Brown, "practised by the people of the Valley in the pre-Islamic period, the building art was one in which they were notably proficient as the remains of their large monuments in stone are a standing proof."[53] That the style which culminated in such masterpieces of architecture as Martand and Avantipura, must have had a long history of development, goes without saying. And that it was a product of influences from different classical schools is evident from the trefoil and the horseshoe arches, and from the fluted pillars.

Buddhist Style

An attempt has been made to link the beginnings of the architectural trends in Kashmir to the Buddhist *stupas* and *chaityas,* foundations of which were recently excavated at Harwan and Ushkur. This, however, poses an inexplicable problem, as only a century or two later to the date assigned to these ruins (third-fourth century AD) we notice some vastly superior masterpieces coming up, without any evidence of a steady growth. Further, in the face of Kalhana's references to foundations made by kings and queens long before the date of Harwan and Ushkur, such a hypothesis is apparently vague and incomprehensible.

For, we have a definite assertion in the *Rajatarangini* that Asoka founded the city of Srinagar and also a Buddhist settlement in the Valley at Sukseletra. No traces of Asoka's city are now left, but we have a glimpse of its grandeur in the account of Heun Tsiang who refers to it as the 'old capital'. It is, therefore, not improbable that the stone architecture as depicted in the monuments still extant, had a much earlier tradition than is supposed by these art historians, and had very little relation with, and developed independent of, the influence of, the foundations at Harwan and Ushkur. These latter seem to have been solitary specimens of the Buddhist settlements of a later period, when Gandhara having lost much of its importance as a stronghold of Buddhism, no longer appealed to monks and preachers who migrated in numbers to a more hospitable land in Kashmir.

At Harwan, the excavations have revealed the foundation of a monastic establishment with a *stupa* and a *chaitya,* corresponding in every particular to the *stupa* courts at Gandhara. The *stupa* was square

53. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture.*

in plan with its base in three tiers and approached by a flight of steps on its western side, the whole being contained within an open quadrangle. The *chaitya* or temple occupied a more prominent position and had a hall with an apsidal end, "a distinctive form of Buddhist temple common in rock architecture of the more southernly parts of India, but rarely found elsewhere."[54]

More interesting than the plan of the foundations is the manner and method of building adopted. Three methods have been disclosed: the earliest consisting of embedded quantities of pebbles in mud mortar; "diaper pebble" masonry where the pebble wall is reinforced by the insertion at intervals of irregular stone; "diaper rubble" resembling in some respects rubble masonry, the walls being composed of large untrimmed stones with the spaces between filled by smaller ones.

Aryan Order of Architecture

It is, however, the stone architecture of Kashmir temples dotting the Valley that at once attracts the attention of every tourist and archaeologist. Cunningham who made the first on-the-spot study of these ruins calls their style of architecture the "Aryan Order". This name it fully merits, for it is as much a distinct order of architecture as any one of the more celebrated classic orders.

The characteristic features of the Kashmirian architecture are its lofty pyramidal roofs, its trefoiled doorways, covered by pyramidal pediments, and the great width of its inter-columnations. That it had been influenced by Greek and Roman styles is evidenced by the close resemblance which the Kashmirian columnade bears to the classical peristyle of Greece. At the same time the echinos, which is the leading feature of the Kashmirian capital, is also the chief member of the Doric capital. It seems that the Kashmiri architects borrowed the style from the Indo-Greeks during the time of their control of the Kabul Valley and Western Punjab.

The superiority of the Kashmirian architecture seems to have been known all over India, for one of the names for the people of Kashmir is *Sastra-silpina,* "architects," a term which could only have been applied to them on account of their well-known skill in building. One wonders how in those ancient days massive stones were lifted and laid in position with great precision on the heights of the temples. But Kashmiris appear to have known the science and laws of

54. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture,* p. 190.

mechanics then, as they used *yantras* or machines, in lifting up enormously bulky and heavy stones.[55]

It is beyond the scope of the present work to give a detailed description of all the old temple ruins in Kashmir. But to follow their architectural development, however, it is necessary to note the outstanding features of a few typical ones.

Perhaps the earliest specimens of this order of architecture are the temple on the Sankaracharya hill in Srinagar; the ruins at Loduv and the Pravaresa temple, now known as Baha-ud-din Sahib, at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill.

Sankaracharya Temple

The most conspicuous monument that attracts the attention of a visitor on reaching Srinagar, is the ancient temple on the crest of the Sankaracharya hill standing 305 metres above the plain. This temple rests on a solid rock and consists of an octagonal basement of 13 layers of stone 20 feet high, on which is supported a square building. On each of the four sides are two projections which terminate in pediment and a gable, the latter intersecting the main roof half way up its slope.

The body of the temple is surrounded by a terrace enclosed by a stone wall or parapet $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. This in following the outline of the basement, preserves its octagonal shape. The terrace surrounding the temple is reached by three flights of stone steps, numbering respectively 6,7 and 18, the last being encased between two walls. From the terrace another flight of 10 steps leads to the door of the temple. The interior is a chamber, circular in plan, with a basin containing a *lingam*. Its general shape is that of a cone, with four sides formed by the rectangular adjustment of eight gable-shaped slabs of masonry. The cone, which is about 25 feet in height, with a proportionate base, rests upon an octagonal raised platform which is about 5 feet above the terrace. The circumference of the platform is about 100 feet. The interior of the temple is 14 feet in diameter: the ceiling is flat and 11 feet high; the walls which are 7 feet thick, are covered with white plaster composed of gypsum, and the roof is s upported by four octagonal limestone pillars. The whole of the

55. *Raj;* i-363, iii-350, 454. That *yantras (yantra: Yander)* were machines or contrivances, is proved by the use of the word in modern Kashmiri, for example, *Yander* (spinning wheel), *Kadi-yander* (carding machine), *Dosi-yander* (contrivance for setting mud-wall), etc.

building is of stone, which is laid throughout in horizontal courses, no cement appearing to have been used.

It appears from a reference in the *Rajatarangini* that this religious edifice on a commanding site, was first built by Jalauka, the son of the great emperor Asoka, about 200 BC. The temple was subsequently rebuilt and dedicated to Jyesthesvara by Gopaditya who reigned form 253 to 328 AD. The hill was known as Gopadri and the village at its foot on the south is still called Gopkar. To this date may be ascribed the low enclosing wall and the plinth of the existing temple, but all the superstructure is evidently of a later date.

The temple shows the early Kashmiri style in a still experimental and simple stage. It tries to introduce the early Sikhara style and has still a one-storeyed gable pediment which is evident even now, despite the later reconstruction. Here also we find the early specimen of the horseshoe arch, prominent in the final stages of this architecture, as for example in Martand.

Temple at Loduv

The temple of Rudresa at Loduv about 3.2 kilometres on the road leading from Pampore to Avantipura, closely copies the structures of Gandhara in plan and broad details. It has a close resemblance to the old temple at Guniyar in the Swat valley. There is, however, a striking difference in the architectural design of Loduv and the temple at Guniyar. Whereas in the latter the barrenness of the cells is relieved internally by four recesses placed diagonally, at Loduv the row of projecting brackets which support the eves of the roof are replaced by a simple cornice consisting of three courses of projecting filleted blocks. Here we notice the first impression of a dome. This and the simplicity of construction and absence of any internal or plastic decoration, indicate its early age.

The ground plan of the main temple is a square of 24 feet. There is only one doorway to the W.S-W. Its head is semi-circular, with a pyramidal pediment slightly projected and divided into two portions, of which the upper one is plain and the other is occupied by a semi-circular ornament. The apex of the pediment reaches the top of the cornice which runs round the top of the walls on the outside. The roof is entirely gone.

The interior is a circle, the diameter of which diminishes from the ground upwards. The wall on the inside shows signs of fire having been used perhaps to destroy the roof which may have

been of wood. The top of the doorway inside is formed by the under side of the course from which the cornice of the interior is projected.

The basement of the temple stands on a platform 48 feet square, faced with stone walls forming a sort of lower basement. The whole stands in the northeast corner. There is an ancient looking *lingam* of dark limestone, $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet in diameter with eight flat faces, standing in the water near the springs which supply the tank. The smaller of the Loduv temples stands a little above and behind the first. Its ground plan is a square of 10 feet. It has only one doorway to the west with a square top covered by a pediment which rests upon the jambs of the door.

Pravaresa and Narasthan

More important, though less spectacular, are the ruins of the temple of Pravaresa which Stein[56] identifies with the enclosure of the cemetery of Baha-ud-din; and of the Ranaswamin temple (Ziarat of Pir Haji Muhammad) in Srinagar. These ruins which according to Kalhana go back to the sixth century AD show that the medieval Kashmir temple type with its vast court with an enclosure of chapels must have developed already though still in a very crude form. The peristyle had cellas without arches, the doors being simply covered with plain lintels. On the other hand, the corner chapels of the front facade which are so characteristic of Martand, Avantipura and Buniar can be traced here.

This is elaborated further in the construction plans of the temple at Narasthan about 16 kilometres north-east of Avantipura. The date of this temple is uncertain, but it definitely belongs to the group described earlier, with the addition of an enclosure wall and imposing gateways — a feature which finds its culmination in the plans of the magnificent Sun temple at Martand.

The situation is very picturesque, looking down the narrow valley while behind it the ground slopes up towards the lofty mountains of the Brariangan range. The temple stands in a walled enclosure about 65 feet square. The main entrance is on the west through an imposing portico; the outer portal is arched, the pediment possessing the usual characteristics of the Aryan order of architecture. The outer vestibule measures 8 feet by 4 feet; in the middle is a square gateway opening into a second vestibule of rather larger dimensions.

The temple, which occupies the centre of the enclosure, is in

56. See Trans. of *Raj.*, Vol.II, p.447.

general appearance similar to that of Loduv, but more imposing in its proportions and elaborate in details. Each side measures 15 feet above the plinth. The porch, which is on the west, projects rather more than three feet from the face of the wall.

The inner entrance is a square gateway 6 feet high by 3 feet wide supported by pillars. Both this and the middle gateway of the north seem to have been fitted with stone doors. The inside chamber is 8 feet square; the walls are blank, with the exception of a small arched recess on the south side of the entrance. The flooring is of stone which has given way in the centre, where probably the image of Visnu stood. About 8 feet from the ground there is a cornice, from which the roof seems to have tapered to a point, the walls are now standing to a height of 24 feet and the pinnacle was probably built about 10 feet higher.

Lalitaditya's Foundations

The real patron and to some extent the founder of the sophisticated Aryan Style of Kashmir architecture was Lalitaditya who built the new city of Parihaspura with the imposing temples and *chaityas,* the famous sun-temple of Martand and the smaller but picturesque temples of Wangat and possibly some temples in the Punjab at Kallar, Ketas and Kafirkot (Bilot). In his constructions we notice a transformation achieved by the absorption of many new inspirations, ideas and techniques from the more developed civilisations in India and countries to her north and west. Like so many empire builders, Lalitaditya took artists from wherever he could obtain them and tried to mould different styles and techniques into a new imperial art bearing the impress of his own personality.

His principal minister, Cankuna, erected the great *stupa* at Parihaspura and other *stupas* at Pandrenthan, decorated with sculptures in the Wei and T'ang Chinese art. The great *chaitya* of his of which the foundations have been unearthed, follows the Gandhara style of architecture in its plan, and Kalhana records the installation in it of a huge Buddha image, modelled perhaps on the Bamiyan Colossus.

The ruins of the two famous temples of Parihasakesava and Muktakesava at Parihaspura show vast enclosed courts, surrounded by chapels bigger in scale than the ones at Narasthan — a plan on which the temple at Martand was also built.

Martand

Martand, the most impressive and grandest of all the ancient temples, occupies undoubtedly the finest situation in Kashmir. This noble ruin is the most striking in size and position of all the existing remains. The temple itself is not more than 40 feet high, but its solid walls and bold outlines, towering over the fluted pillars of the surrounding colonnade, give it an imposing appearance. There are no petty confused details, but all are distinct and massive and most admirable suited to the general character of the building. The mass of buildings consist of one lofty central edifice with a small detached wing on each side of the entrance, the whole standing in a large quadrangle, surrounded by a colonnade of fluted pillars with intervening trefoil headed recesses. The length of the outer side of the wall which is blank, is about 90 yards, that of the front is about 60 yards. There are in all 85 columns, a singularly appropriate number in a temple of the Sun, if, as is supposed, the number 84 is accounted sacred by the Hindus in consequence of its being the product of the number of days in the week and the number of signs in Zodiac.

The remains of three gateways opening into the court are now standing. The principal of these fronts due west — towards Anantang. It is also rectangular in shape and built with enormous blocks of limestone, 6 or 8 feet in length and one of 9 feet and of proportionate solidity, cemented with mortar. It is surprising how these huge stones were piled one upon the other to a great height with such exactitude. The central building is the most imposing structure and above all has (as the temples in Kashmir possess) in addition to the cella or sanctuary, a nave 18 feet square. The sanctuary alone is left entirely bare, the two other compartments being lined with rich panellings and sculptured niches. It has been conjectured that the roof was of pyramidal form and that the entrance chamber and wings were similarly carved. There would thus have been four distinct pyramids of which that over the inner chamber must have been the loftiest, the height of its pinnacle above the ground being about 75 feet.

The temple is 60 feet long and 38 feet wide, its height, when complete must have been 75 feet. the courtyard that surrounds and encloses the temple, is a more remarkable object than the temple itself. Its internal dimensions are 220 by 142 feet. On each face is a central cella, larger and higher than the colonnade in which it is placed. The height is 30 feet and the pillars on each side are 9 feet high — not lofty but they have a Grecian aspect which is interesting. It is thought that the whole of the interior of the quadrangle was

originally filled with water to a level up to one foot of the base of the columns and that access to the temple was gained by a raised pathway of slabs supported on solid blocks at short intervals which connected the gateway flight of steps with that leading to the temple. The same kind of pathway stretched right across of quadrangle from one side doorway to the other. A constant supply of fresh water was kept up through a canal from the river Lidar, which was conducted along the side of the mountain for the service of the village close by.

Bates says that the interior must have been as imposing as the exterior. On ascending the flight of steps now covered by the ruins, the votary of the Sun entered a highly decorated chamber with a doorway on each side covered by a pediment with a trefoil-headed niche containing a bust of the Hindu triad. On the flanks of the main entrance as well as those of the side doorways were trefoil niches, each of which held a deity. The interior decorations of the roof can only be conjecturally determined, as there do not appear to be any ornamented stones that could, with certainty, be assigned to it.

Cunningham thinks that the erection of this Sun temple was suggested by the magnificent sunny prospect which its position commands. He remarks — "It overlooks the finest view in Kashmir, and perhaps in the known world. Beneath it lies the 'Paradise of the East', with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no pretty peer in a half-mile glen, but the full display of a valley 30 miles in breadth and 84 miles in length, the whole of which lies beneath the can of the wonderful Martand."

What is most impressive in Martand is the apparently overwhelming size — to some degree an optic illusion — and the complete harmony of the buildings and of all their decorations and figure sculptures. As we have already seen they represent the conclusion of a long development from the simple start depicted by the temples of Sankarcharya and Pravaresa, through the Parihaspura *stupas* and temples to the very zenith of Martand.

"On the other hand", records Dr. Goetz, "Martand stands not quite isolated. It has a smaller counterpart in the plains, the temple of Malot in the Salt Range. Malot raises the problems of the Martand temple even more acutely. For it has a facade of purely Roman-Corinthian half-pillars enclosing trifoliated archways crowned by a set

of high *Sikharas*. If the first has already been proved characteristic for Lalitaditya's reign, the second was possible only in a time of the closest contact with Bihar and Bengal — i.e. when the king of Gauda had become Lalitaditya's vassal and prisoner."[57]

Martand has also quite a following of temples of the same lay-out and construction, though of simple execution, as for example Wangat and Buniar, which must belong to the same period.

Wangat Temples

Wangat in the Sindh valley is the site of some ruined temples near the spring called Naran Nag, at the foot of the Bhutser or Bhutesvara spur of the Haramukh peak. They are in two groups, situated at a distance of about 100 yards from each other.

One group consists of six buildings, all more or less ruined. The remains of an enclosing wall, measuring 176 feet by 130 feet, may still be traced, although there is no evidence of the form it originally had. The largest temple of the group measures 24 feet square and has a projection on each of its four sides, measuring 3 feet by $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The main block is surmounted by a pyramidal roof of rubble, formerly, no doubt, faced with stone; and the gables which terminated the porch-like projections on all four sides, can still be traced. There are two entrances facing east and west. Not far from the group is a platform, rectangular in shape (100 feet by 67 feet) which appears to have been the basement of some building or temple. A colonade once existed all round it — numerous bases of pillars are to be seen in their places on one of the longer sides of the rectangle, and several fragments of fluted columns are lying about, their average diameter being 2 feet. Its chief features are the size of the structural units and the resultant largeness of its parts, inspired by the great scale of the natural surroundings.

About 20 yards to the north-east of the platform are the ruins of the second group of temples, 11 in number, with the remains of a gate-way in the centre about 22 feet wide, similar to that belonging to the first group. The principal one among them is 25 feet square with projections on each face.

The chief peculiarities of these ruins are the number of temples contained within the same enclosing wall, and the absence of symmetry in their arrangement. In antiquity some of the ruins are supposed to rank next to the Sankaracharya temple. Major Cole assigned their age to about the commencement of the Christian era. Lalitaditya built a

57. Goetz, *Art and Letters*, XXVII, No. 1. p.8.

temple for Siva-Jyesthesa which Stein thinks is the principal shrine in the western group.

Avantipura Temples

The architectural trends of the Karkota period reached a logical culmination in the next generation under the Utpalas. The two temples of Avantisvamin and Avantesvara, ruins of which are still extant, adorned the city of Avantipura built on a commanding site overlooking a bend in the river Jhelum, 29 kilometres south-east of Srinagar.

Both these temples are now shapeless mass of ruins, but the gateways of both are standing and the colonnade of the smaller temple, which had been completely buried under ground, has been excavated. The style corresponds with that of the Martand quadrangle, but the semi-attached pillars of the arched recesses are enriched with elaborate carving of very varied character, while the large detached columns are somewhat less elegantly proportioned.

We find in these temples and the one built by Samkaravarman at Pattan, "an increased refinement of form, a more polished effect generally, evidently a reflection of that riper cultural atmosphere which prevailed during the reign of Avantivarman."

After the temples belonging to the period of the Utpala rulers not much of note remains of the Kashmir style of architecture. A few temples notable those of Buniar and Uri on the Jhelum valley road depict the same stereotyped and ossified features. The temple at Buniar is in a most perfect condition in the Valley and owes its escape from destruction to its remote situation.

Pandrenthan

By the beginning of the tenth century the growth of the style had come to an end, as owing largely to political circumstances, temple building received little encouragement after that date. Small shrines continued to be built, and in them there are some features showing progress of the style in details. A perfect example is that of the small temple at Pandrenthan, 5 kilometres to the south of Srinagar, built by Meruvardhana in the middle of the tenth century AD. Built in an artificial tank 40 yards square, the temple is a perfect type of the later development and the most modern example of the true Kashmiri style extant. It is 18 feet square with a projecting portico on each side and displays a confused exuberance of decoration, more especially the repetition of pediment within trefoil. The domed roof is well worth

inspection, being covered with sculptures of classic design.

There are several other shrines, some much smaller than Pandrenthan and some monolithic such as at Payar, Mammal, Kother and Bumzu, which illustrate the decline of the style.

Temples in Jammu

The Kashmirian style of architecture spread out of the Valley to the Punjab Himalayas, particularly to Jammu principalities, Kangra and Chamba. We have typical examples in the temple ruins in Babor, and Billavar (ancient Vallapura) in Jammu. Babor about 35 kilometres from Jammu city has been identified with Babbapura of the *Rajatarangini* and was the ancient capital of the Dogras. The principal remains are a group of seven temples. An inscription in Sarada script reveals that these temples were built in the 11th century AD. The main temple is of "great solidity and considerable beauty; the chief feature being a hall whose roof was held up by eight fluted columns supporting beams of stone ten feet in length." The whole mass of stone was ornamented with carving.

The decorative features of the Kashmir temples and their Indo-Aryan style is quite apparent in these ruins, which "incidentally gives additional corroboration to the impression one derives from reading Kalhana's account of these centuries (800 to 1150 AD) that there must have been considerable political and economic intercourse between the Kashmir Valley and these sub-montane tracts."

Billavar, about 104.5 kilometres from Jammu, is the sité of a fine medieval temple known as Billavakesvara. Its "spire is profusely ornamented externally, the ornament consisting mainly of floral scrolls, flower and vase decoration and niches with stepped pedimental roofs filled with decorative lozenges and figures of gods."[58] The temple dates back to the 11th century AD.

Cultural Unity of India

Nothing perhaps brings out in bolder relief the picture of the unity of India from time immemorial than the cultural fabric of ancient Kashmir. Despite its geographical isolation we find this small kingdom playing a prominent role in enriching the cultural life which pulsated throughout the length and breadth of India. For, it was early in its history that the Valley was settled by the Indo-Aryan immigrants from

58. *Raj.*, v-170-71.

the plains of the Punjab, and having inherited the Vedic art and culture they developed it to a remarkable degree.

The first historical figure that we come across in the *Rajatarangini* is Asoka who brought the Valley and the neighbouring territory into his vast empire. He personally visited this beautiful land bringing with him Buddhist missionaries to preach the doctrine of the Buddha. This had a profound effect on the cultural life of the country, as Kashmir thenceforth became the fountain-head of Mahayana and an advance post of Indian culture. From there went forth in the time of Kaniska and after, a number of missionaries to distant regions of central Asia and China who carried the Doctrine of the Buddha to those countries. This further forged the links with the art and the cultural centres in the rest of India. For, apart from becoming politically a part of the country under Kaniska, several Buddhist scholars and 'acharyas' made the Valley the headquarters of their activities. Among these were the celebrated Nagarjuna, Asvagosh, Vasubandhu, Dharmatrata, and a host of others. Similarly Kashmirian Buddhist scholars adorned the Vikramasila and Nalanda Universities.

A further bond of unity was the systematic study and cultivation of the Sanskrit language. In fact all the literature produced in Kashmir on Buddhism was in Sanskrit. We have already surveyed the enormous contribution of Kashmir to Sanskrit poetry, drama, philosophy and literature in general. And it is not hard to imagine the constant flow of scholars and savants from Kashmir to different centres of learning in the rest of India and vice versa.

In philosophy and aesthetics the Pandits of Kashmir made such notable contribution that they were in great demand at centres of learning in the rest of India. Similar was the case with Kashmiri poets and dramatists. Bilhana's is an outstanding example. But long before him we find a poor Pandit, Matrigupta, repairing to the court of Vikramadity-Harsa where his merit was recognised by the king who bestowed on him the viceroyalty of Kashmir. The family of Sarangadeva who wrote his *Sangitaratnakara,* and other works served under the Yadavas of Devagiri. Bilhana and Sarangadeva were not the only Kashmiris to have taken service under Vikramaditya VI Tribhavanmalla. The Lakshmeswar inscription of the year 27 of the king refers to His Majesty's high minister and general Bhimanaya or Bhima, a native of Kashmir (Ep. Ind. Vol. XII, p. 28). Then again the Bodh Gaya inscription of Asokachalla of Laksmana Samvat 51, makes mention of a Pandit of Kashmir, Abhaya Sriraja, who was the

royal preceptor. Another celebrated monk of Kashmir Vinaya Srimitra chose his abode the Kanakastupavihara in the district of Tipperah.

That the current of culture was flowing from both directions is amply proved by the installation at his court by Lalitaditya of the famous poets Vakpatiraja, the author of *Gaudavaho* and Bhavabhuti who has given us that masterpiece of lyric-cum-devotional poetry, *Malatimadhava.* Earlier, we are told by Kalhana, several scholars were got from other parts of the country in the time of Abhimanyu to restore the study of Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* which had gone out of vogue in the Valley. A similar restoration is referred to in the reign of Jayapida.

Many famous writers and philosophers of Kashmir trace their origin to ancestors who came from different parts of India. For instance, Jayanta Bhatta's and his equally famous son Abhinanda's ancestors came from Gauda (Bengal). Kshemendra mentions the presence in Kashmir of students from Gauda and other parts of India. Abhinavagupta's ancestors came to Kashmir from Kanyakubja during the reign of Lalitaditya.

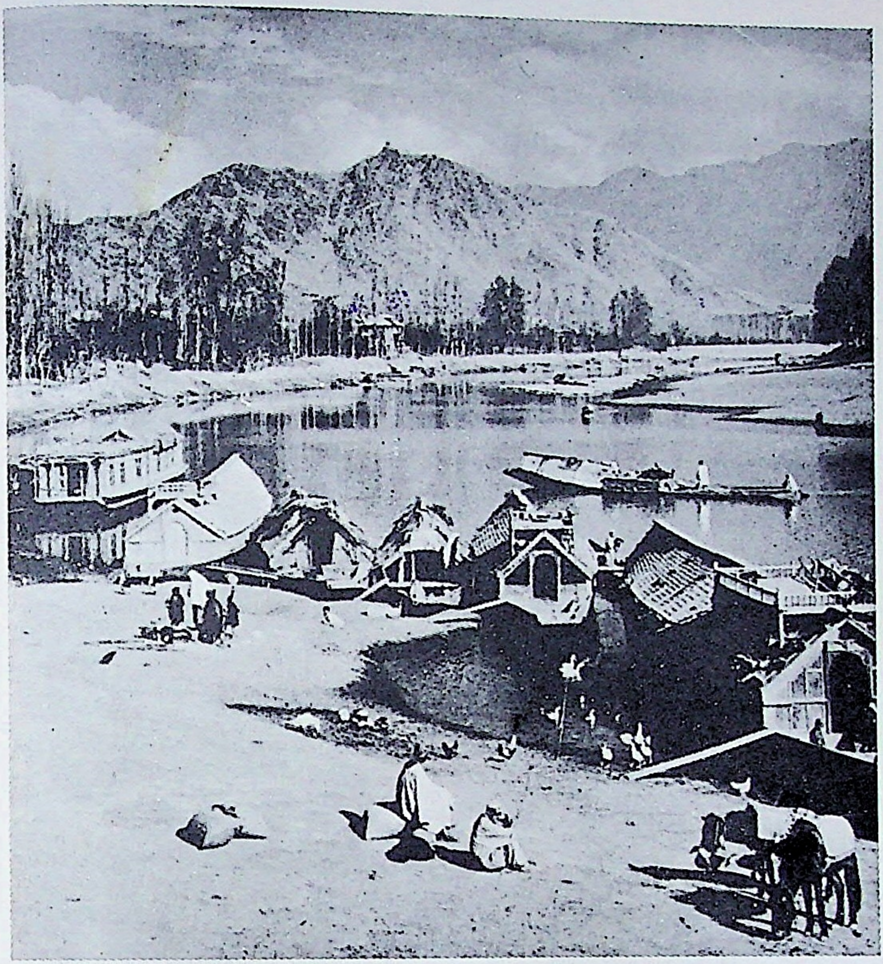
In music, dance and drama, we find a similar interchange of ideas. Whereas Kashmiri musicians acquired proficiency in North Indian *ragas.* We find at the same time that under Harsa masters from Karnataka were also invited to give lessons to musicians of Kashmir. Harsa also introduced the Karnataka type of coins as well as South Indian fashinons in dress and ornaments. In the numerous sculptures found in Kashmir, we notice the Indian dress — the *choli* and the *dhoti.* When Kashmiri artists acquired mastery of the Gandhara style of art, they produced the images of Buddha and Bodhisatvas. This was the art which the Kashmiri missionaries carried across the frontiers of India to China and Tibet. And in architecture too the temple design and the ground plan very much followed the fundamentals of the temple plans in the rest of the country.

The administrative machinery in Kashmir was set up on the traditional pattern of the "eighteen offices of State" as mentioned in *Mahabharata,* and in the military organisation, the model was set by the Mauryan generals.

In commerce, trade, and social organisation there has been one pattern all over India — the same spirit animating the cultural and religious life of the country. Pilgrims from Kashmir whether HIndu or Buddhist visit the holy places from Rameswaram to Badrinath and

Dwarka to Puri. We are told by Kalhana that Kashmiris were exempted from payment of pilgrims tax at Gaya. And year after year devotees of Siva from all over the country go on pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath in Kashmir.

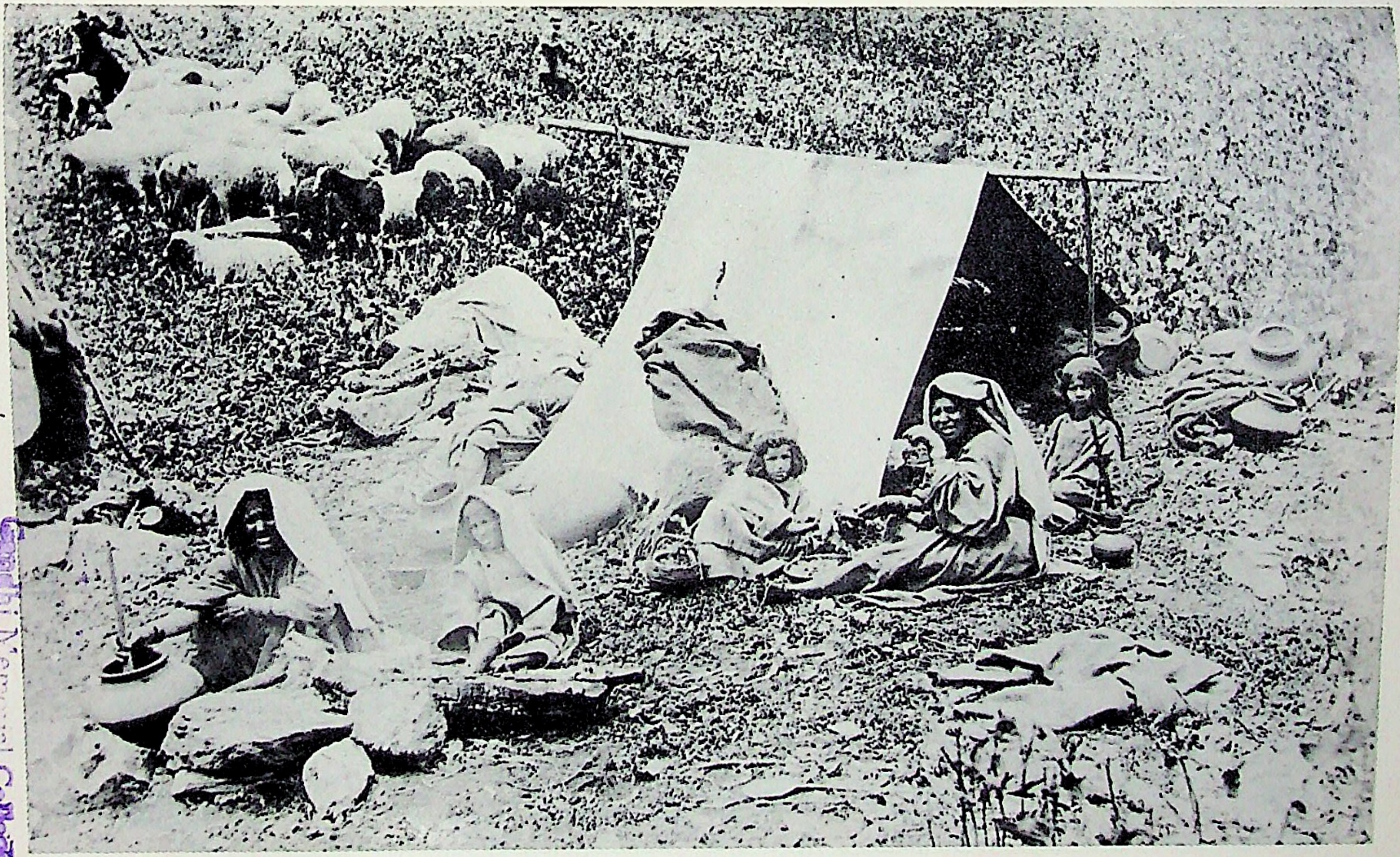
So whether in Sanskrit learning, or philosophy, or art and architecture, religion or science, a common life has been pulsating all over the country from ancient times, flowering into that broad-based 'unity in diversity' which is the unique contribution of India to human civilisation and progress.



Life on the river Jhelum

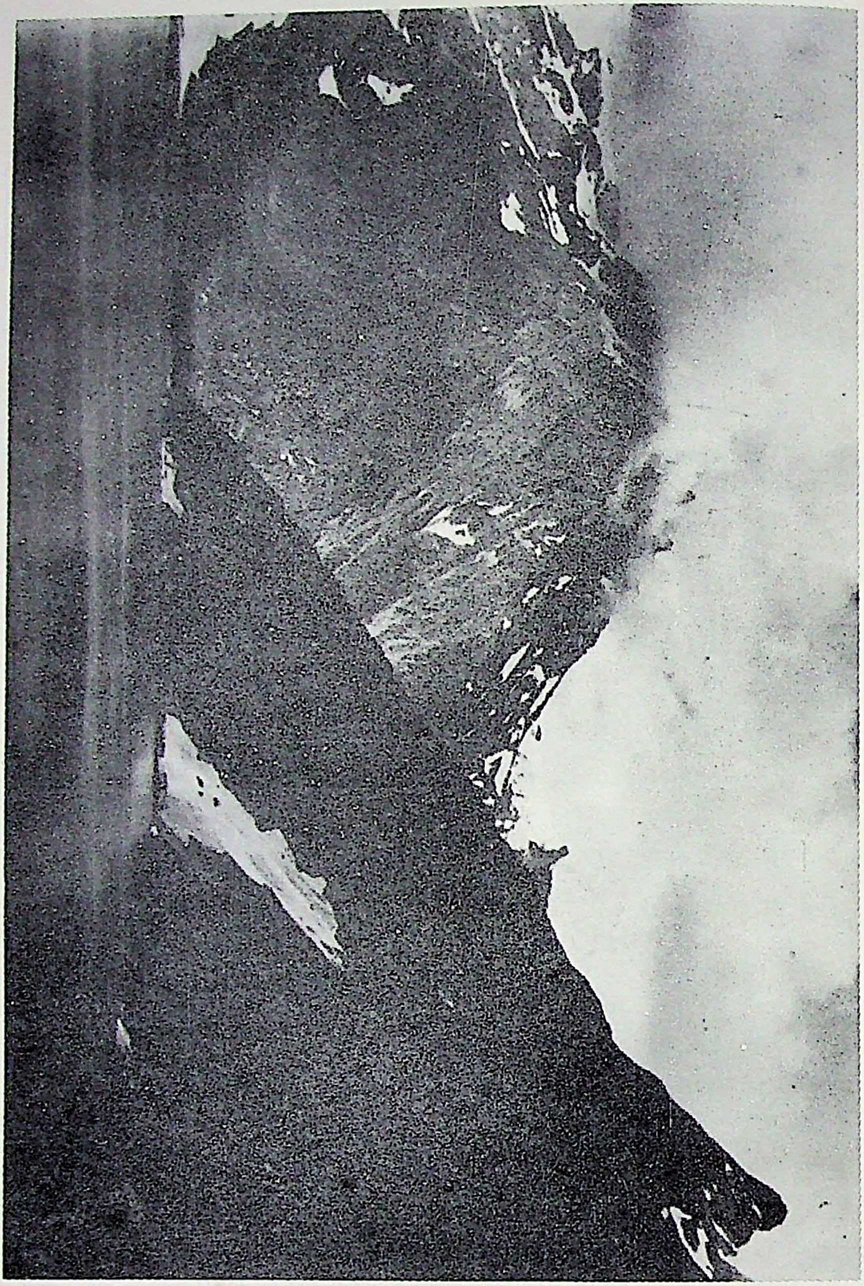


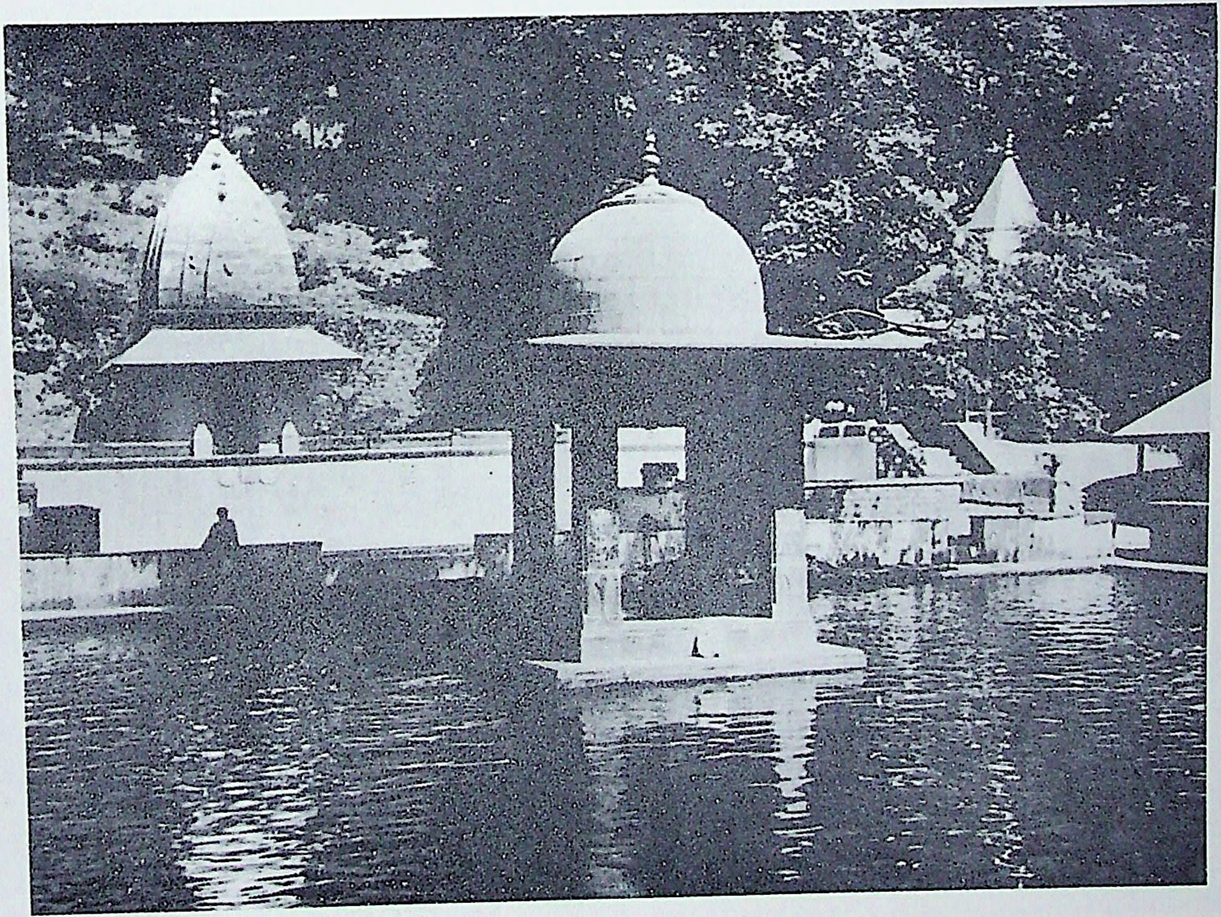
A marriage ceremony at Leh. The bridegroom offering prayers according to Buddhist rites



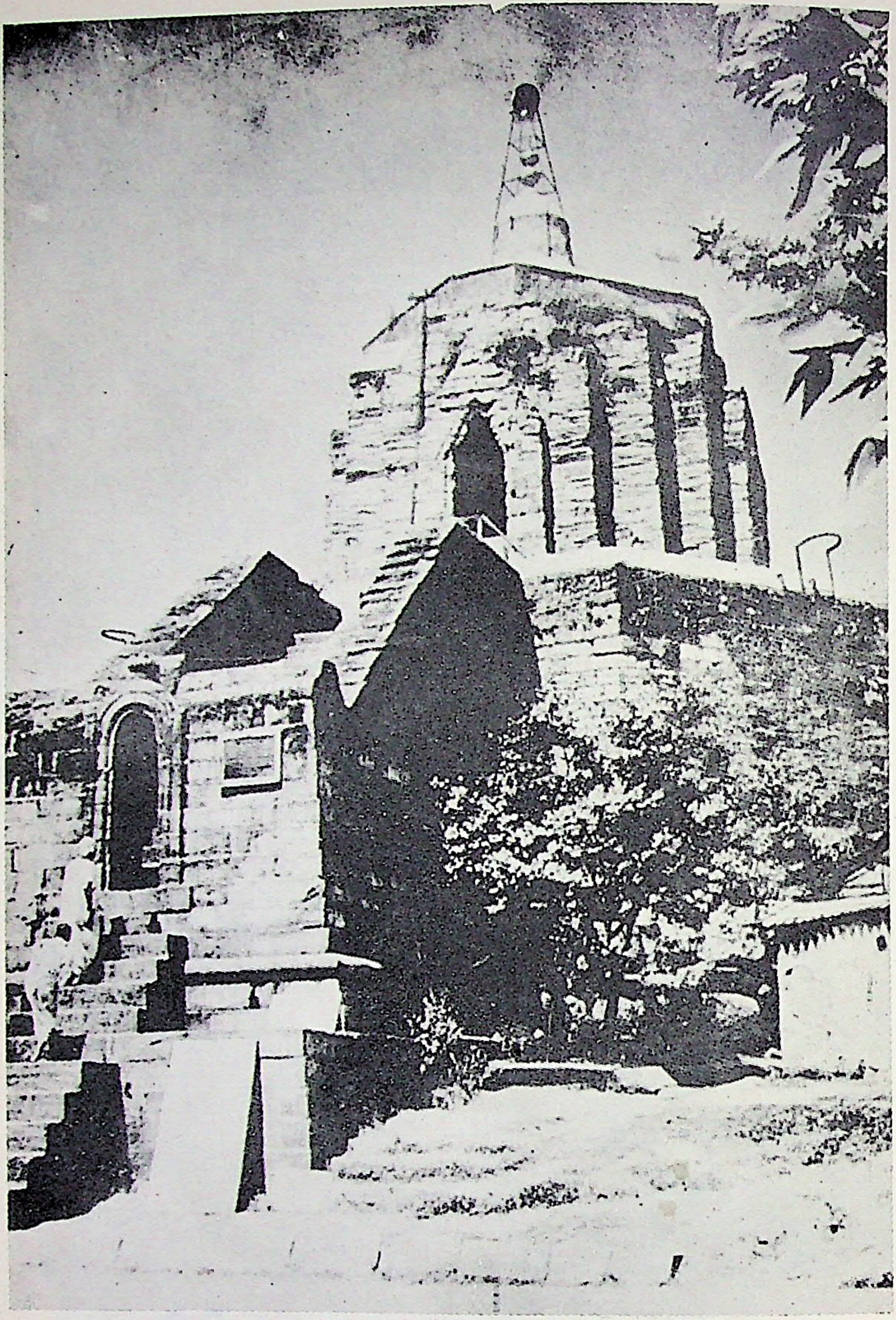
Shepherds on a mountain meadow

Sheshnag lake





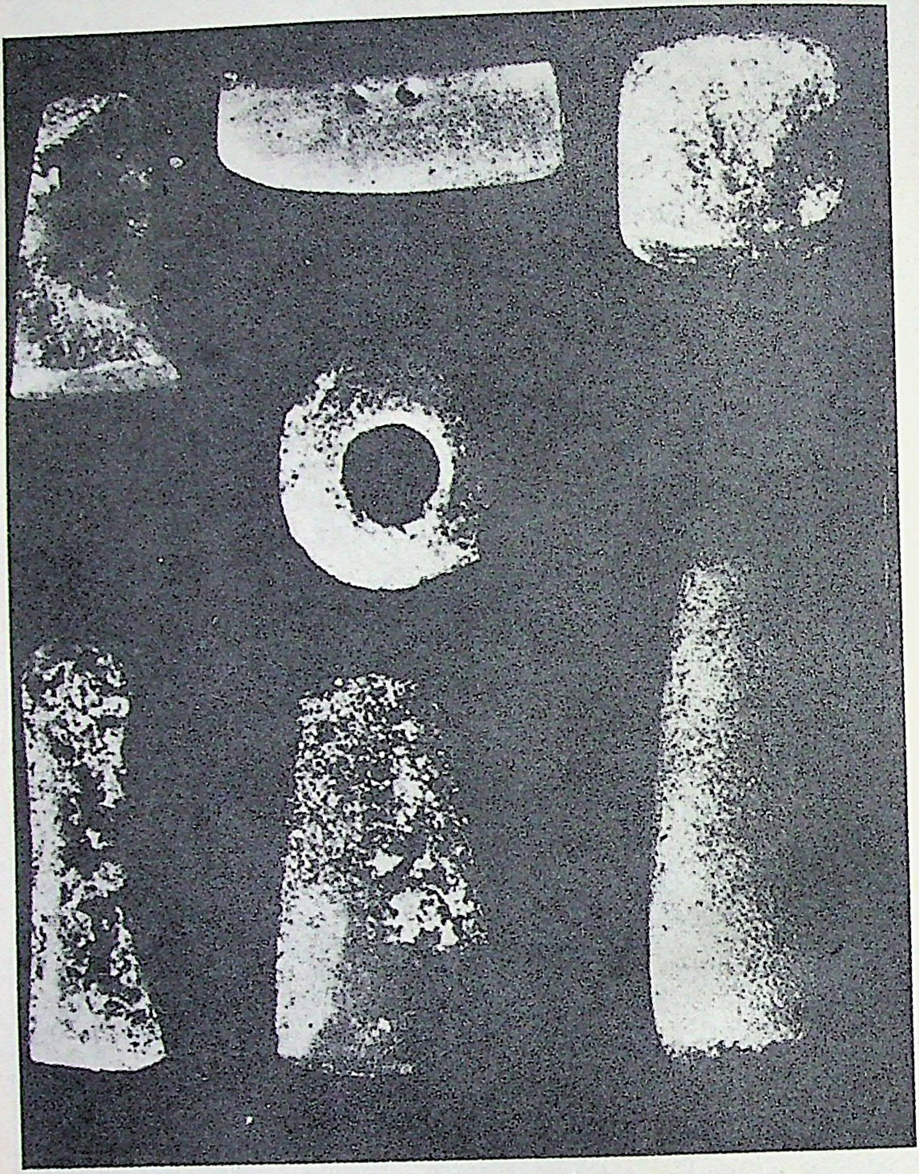
The tank and temple at Mattan



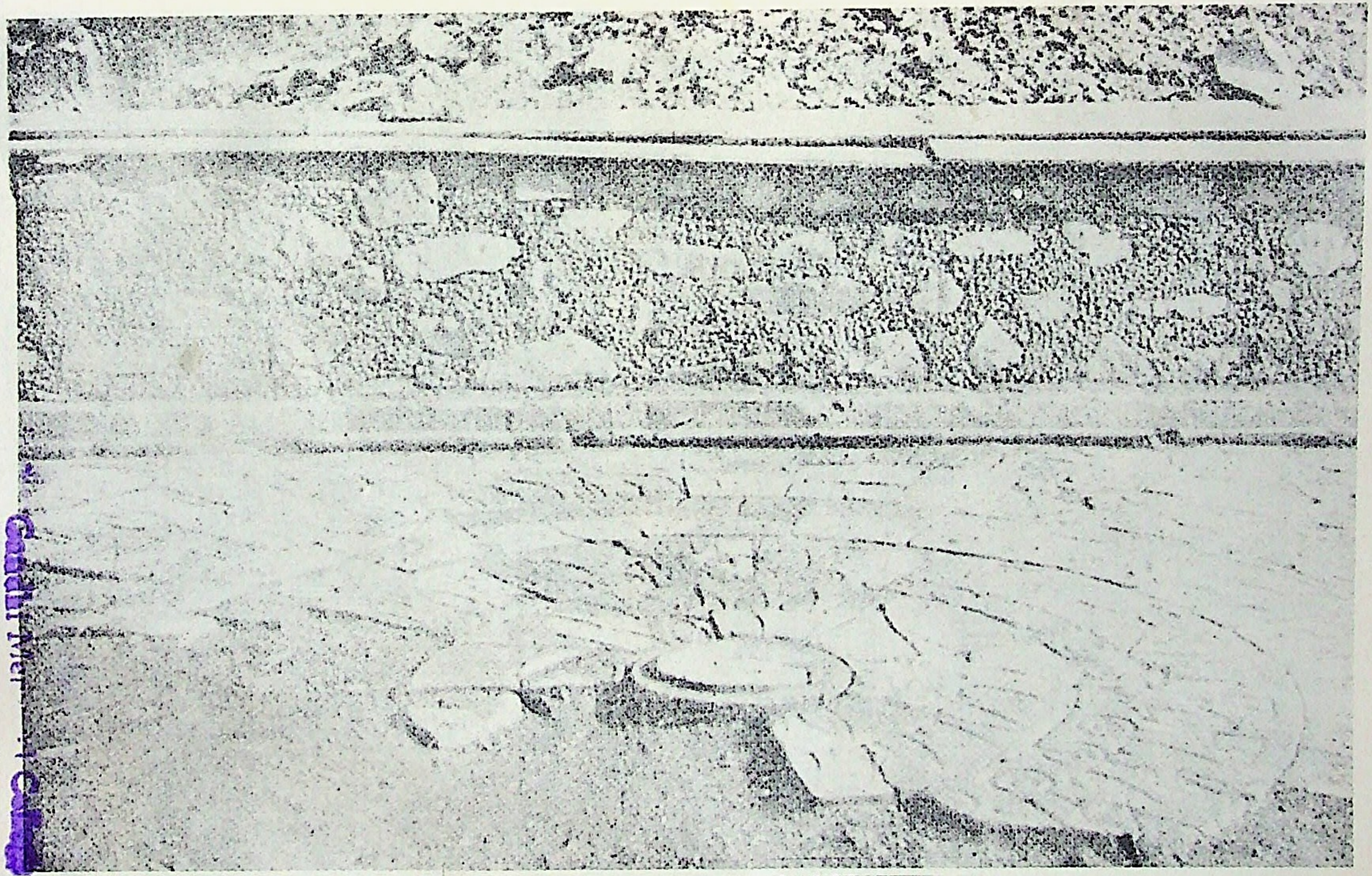
The ancient temple on the top of Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar



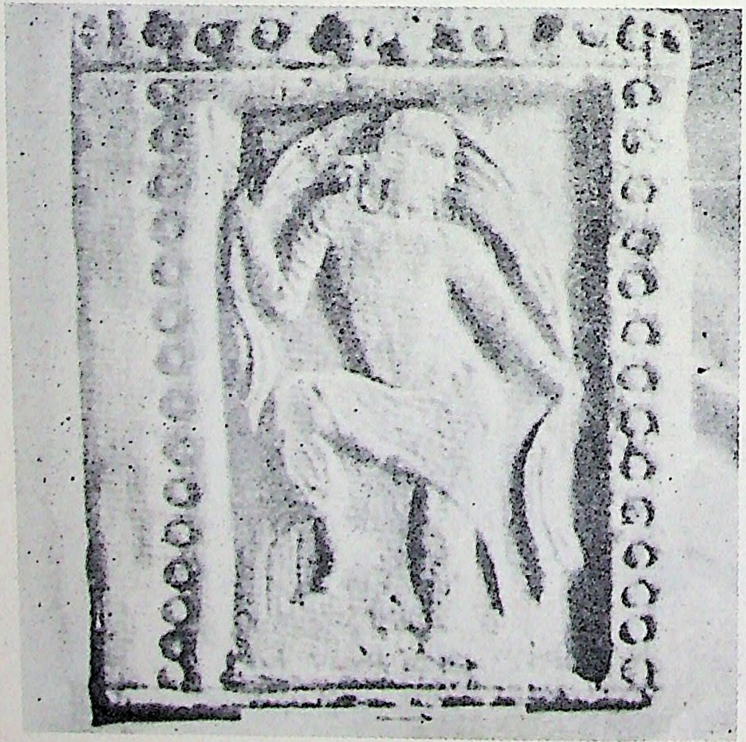
Burzahom excavations, showing successive floor levels

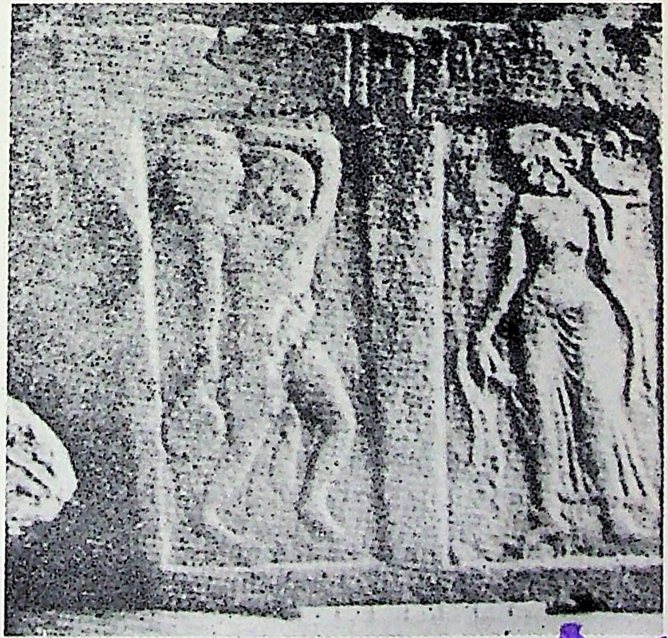


neoliths from Burzahom



Tiled floor excavated at Harwan

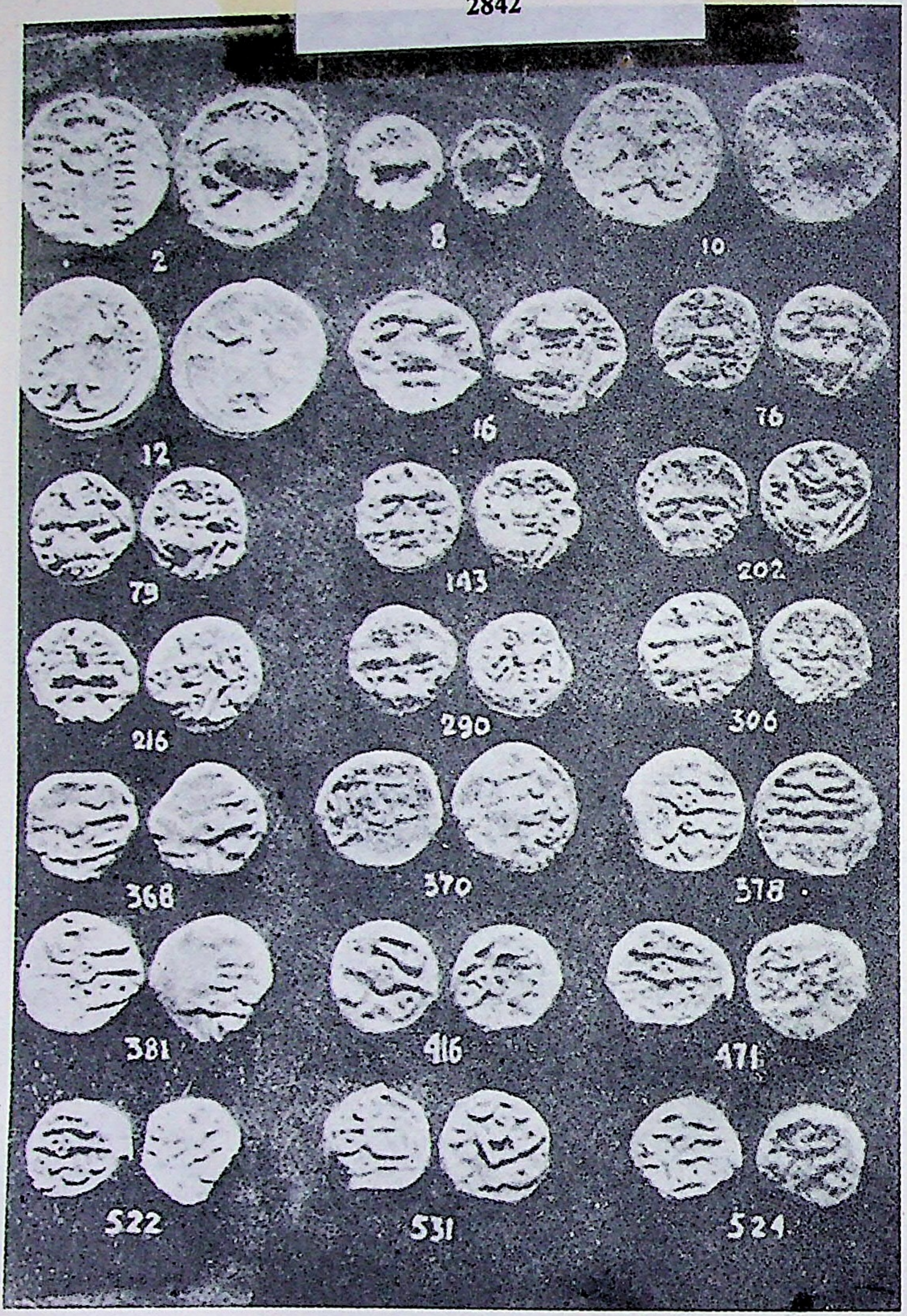




Pompeian figures, Harwan



Elaborate sculpture at Martand



Copper Coins of Hindu rulers of Kashmir

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

P.N.K. Bamzai, born in 1910 in a Kashmiri Pandit Family of scholarly traditions, received his first lessons in historical research from his father, Pandit Anand Koul who was the pioneer of modern research on the history and folklore of Kashmir.

He got his degree from the Panjab University. His articles and papers pertaining to the history of Kashmir have been published in several journals in India and abroad. Besides writing several books on the subject, he has to his credit the monumental work, *A History of Kashmir* which carries a foreword by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

In 1954 he joined the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, as Editor of the illustrated *Kashmir*, which post he had graced for six years. He has been Editor of almost all the journals published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Subsequently he was deputed by the Government of India to work as Adviser (Publication) to the Government of Ethiopia.

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